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# **THE SISTERS' YEAR.**



THE  
SISTERS' YEAR.

*Novel*

"Time and Tide had thus their sway,  
Changing like an April day ;  
Smiling noon for sullen morrow ;  
Years of joy for hours of sorrow."

SCOTT.



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# THE SISTERS' YEAR.

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## CHAPTER I.

"The flying years, the flying years,  
How rapidly they wing away!  
With all their coveted hopes and fears;  
A mingled train of grave and gay."

TEN years! How long! What an age it seems to look forward to when we are young; how short sometimes to look back upon when we are old. We say to the young, "That will not happen for ten years:" we might almost as well say, "That will never happen," for all the fear which we inspire, or the promise we hold forth. Ten years later we say, "That happened ten years ago." The occurrence seems but of yesterday, and the intervening years, with their joys and sorrows, only as a tale that is told.

And yet, with sure and certain footsteps, old Time goes onward, bearing all with him at an even, unvarying pace, whether, in our joy and gladness, he seems to fly on golden pinions; or, in sad days of loneliness and sorrow, to lag wearily and drearily along a rough, uneven road. Ten years! It is a serious portion out of our three-score and ten; half our lives when we are twenty; a third when we are thirty; decreasing its proportion certainly as our years advance, and yet a considerable part whatever time of life we have attained to—a part, for the days and hours of which, there must be much to answer, and during which there has, generally speaking, been much both of joy and sorrow, pleasure and suffering, in this chequered, April-



day existence of ours. And yet, when it is past, what is it? A tale that is told, finished now, and unalterable. Let us pray, and anxiously strive, that at the end of each of our decades, we may be able to look back on difficulties surmounted, on evils conquered; and feel as travellers, who are, although often through danger, trouble, and distress, mounting ever higher, coming ever nearer, to that country into which sorrow and distress cannot enter.

Ten years had passed since Euphemia and Ellen Walker, the joint heroines of this history, had paid their first visit to Holybrook, where resided their grandfather, George Grey, with his three children, Wilfred, Margaret, and Fanny, who had all, at that time, arrived at man's and woman's estate.

The incidents of this visit have been related in a former narrative, and the characters, now to be introduced to the reader, have been, with few exceptions before described.

Nevertheless, as the lapse of ten years must inevitably make many changes, both in the young and the old, and as all readers may not have been so kind as to peruse the former story, we shall take the liberty of once more introducing, and again describing, the personages with whom we hope they will, by the perusal of these volumes, become, ere long, better acquainted.

Effie and Ellen Walker were the daughters of Charles Walker, a corn merchant, residing at Lowbridge, a country town in one of the midland counties of Ireland, who, some twenty-one years before this time, had married Marion, the eldest daughter of George Grey, who was the possessor of flour mills in one of the more southern counties, not far from the old city and port of Glarisford. These mills were situated in the grange of Holybrook, amidst the wild but picturesque country which lies at the feet of the romantic Glarisford mountains, and not far from the ruins of one of the oldest of the abbeys, or seats of learning which were once the boast of the Emerald Isle. It is to this country, and to the city of Glarisford, and its environs, that we now wish to call the reader's attention.

Ten years, as we have said, had gone by, with their chances and changes, their sorrow and their mirth, since the two girls had first visited Holybrook. To them, these years had not been a period of much change, excepting that gradual, but very

important one, from childhood to womanhood. They had lived peacefully in their quiet home, and neither death nor misfortune had separated them from any who were very near or dear to them: their home circle was unbroken; and although there had been changes at Holybrook Mills, they were for the most part changes for the better.

Old Mr. Grey had never succeeded very well in business, and had of later years given up the management of affairs altogether to his son, who possessed much greater capacities for buying and selling and getting gain, and under whose jurisdiction the mills promised ere long to become some of the most extensive and flourishing in the south of Ireland. To the elder man, close application to business had always been irksome, particularly as he had never had the knack of making money, so that when to this was added much feebleness, proceeding both from age and rheumatism, he was glad to retire from business altogether, and on Wilfred's marriage, he went, with his eldest daughter, to reside in a pretty cottage on the outskirts of Glarisford, and not much more than a mile from Holybrook.

There he now lived, enjoying life as much or more than in his early days; ease and quietude suited him best, and the tender care and constant companionship of his daughter Margaret, rendered his declining years tranquil and happy.

Margaret Grey was still unmarried, although now in her thirty-fifth year. Many years before this time she had been engaged to, and just upon the eve of marriage with, Theodore Jefferson, the eldest son and heir of Arthur Jefferson, to whom belonged all the lands of Holybrook, as well as a very extensive district stretching along the mountains' sides.

Wilfred Grey was at the same time engaged to Mr. Jefferson's only daughter.

The marriages were approved by the parents on both sides, and it was arranged that they should be solemnised as soon as Theodore Jefferson had completed his twenty-third year. The time which preceded this had been to him and to Margaret Grey a time of very great happiness. United in all their pleasures, tastes, and pursuits, the present was for them all brightness, the future all golden promise; but that promise was never to be realised. When riding together one afternoon in May, 185-, a few weeks before the time appointed for their

marriage, Theodore's horse, a very spirited animal, started at some object on the roadside, reared suddenly, and fell backwards upon its rider. Assistance was at hand, but all assistance was vain, for the injuries received by the young man were beyond the reach of medical skill. He was brought home to his father's house, but did not survive the accident for many hours. He was fully sensible of his situation, and Margaret was with him to the last. There is no need—rather there are no words which could tell what was her anguish. She was young, and life was strong within her, and she did not die. Alas! that in this bright world, to live, should sometimes seem to the sufferer the saddest doom of all.

In the following year Wilfred Grey was married to Julia Jefferson.

Many wondered, at the time, that a man of Mr. Jefferson's position should approve such a connection for his only daughter; but he was, in some ways, as the world judges, a man of peculiar ideas, and wished for little more than good education, sound principles, and stirring worth in those whom his children should select as their partners for life. Wilfred Grey possessed all these qualifications, and besides them much ability for business; so that, although at the time of his marriage he was far from wealthy, since then Fortune had smiled on all his undertakings, and he was now undeniably a rich and prosperous man.

To this increasing prosperity Holybrook Mills and their environs very plainly testified; everything in and around them was well kept and in good order. The old cottage, which the river had proved to be a rather unsafe habitation, had been removed, and on the hill above where it had formerly stood, a new and handsome dwelling-house had been erected, and was now surrounded by pretty gardens and extensive pleasure-grounds.

Fanny Grey still lived at Holybrook, assisting her brother and sister-in-law in all housekeeping duties, as well as in the care of their four children.

Fanny, although the youngest of Mr. Grey's family, was now past thirty. She was an exceedingly clever and efficient young woman; some thought her rather too clever and efficient—if such a thing be possible. These very clever

people are not certainly always the most agreeable companions, perhaps, because it is difficult for them to make sufficient allowance for those who are not equally gifted; and wishing, perhaps, to raise the world in general to their own high level, they take the regulation of their friends and neighbours a little too much into their own hands—are, in fact, a little too “apt to teach;” and when such teaching is not received as they could wish, they are not always very “slow either to speech or to wrath.” But in introducing Fanny Grey once more to our readers, we must not detract from her character, which, although not always attractive, had many good points. Now, although in her thirty-second year, she is as handsome as she ever was; her hair as dark and glossy, and her eyes as black and sparkling. She is unmarried still, but soon to be united to the Rev. Paul Tatlow, formerly curate and now rector of the parishes of Holybrook and Iveagh, who for more than ten years has been her constant and devoted lover. Fanny had had her period of romance, as every one has, sooner or later, and during that period she had scorned the Rev. Paul Tatlow, who, although a very estimable man, was not just such an one as was likely to charm the heart of a young maiden. Perhaps, as he advanced in life, his sterling qualities became more apparent; perhaps, as the lady advanced in life, she was better able to value these qualities; be this as it may, she had at last consented to be his wife, and the marriage was to take place early in the spring of this year.

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## CHAPTER II.

ARTHUR JEFFERSON had not long survived his eldest son, and Holybrook Abbey, with all the lands of Holybrook, Iveagh, and Ballynock, were at his death divided equally between his two younger sons, twins, by name Julius and Julian.

Theodore was the only one of his children to whom Mr. Jefferson had not, as nearly as it was possible, given the name of the lovely young wife whom he had almost idolised, and whose early death had cast a gloom over all the remainder of his life. He had married a second time, but more for the sake

of his children than from any prospect of increasing his own happiness. The second Mrs. Jefferson was, however, an excellent woman, and had proved herself well worthy of his choice, notwithstanding that she was not well qualified for assisting her husband in his favourite pursuits, for she was not learned, "save in gracious household ways;" but she had been the best and kindest of step-mothers, and a faithful, loving, and devoted wife to the somewhat moody man, whose whims and peculiarities she bore with unwavering and unruffled good humour, and to whose knowledge and literary acquirements she looked up as to those of a superior being. After her husband's death, and when his children were grown up, she still lived at the Abbey, making it a comfortable home for her step-sons, both of whom were as much attached to her as if she had been their own mother.

Julius had entered the army at an early age. He had been in the worst of the Crimean war; borne its horrors and braved its dangers. He had stood for days and nights in the frozen trenches; slept on the muddy and almost unsheltered ground; scaled fort and rampart; fought in the thickest of the fight; seen his comrades fall by thousands around him; and yet, returned to his native land, unscathed by sword or sickness, a captain in his twenty-second year.

Since then, when at home, he had devoted himself much to field sports, and in particular to fox-hunting, which those who have had experience of both say has all the excitement of war, whilst the danger to life and limb is twenty per cent. less. Julius possessed much personal beauty, greatly resembling what Theodore had been, but without his delicacy of constitution. His figure was tall, graceful, and well-proportioned; his features regular, and his fine countenance and dark eyes full of the life and animation imparted by sound health and high spirits. He was bold, gay, and thoughtless, ready for all acts of daring courage, fond of amusement, excitement, stir of any kind, with little thought of consequences, or indeed of the future in any way; the present was his first consideration, and the present had in general served him well, and treated him kindly.

Julian differed from his twin-brother in almost every respect. Neither in person, tastes, pursuits, nor education was there

the slightest similarity. Notwithstanding this, and although since boyhood they had been much separated, there subsisted the strongest attachment between the brothers. Julius had spent some years at a public school, and had very early received his commission. Julian's delicacy of constitution had rendered a home education more desirable for him. During Mr. Jefferson's life he had himself attended to the studies of his youngest son; and after his death the boy's further education was entrusted to Mr. Tatlow, the curate of Holybrook. It would have been better, in many ways, had Julian's health permitted him to mix more with the world, and especially with persons of his own age, for his retired and lonely life had fostered too much the dreamy and poetic turn of his mind.

There was about him a languor and *insouciance*, whether produced by delicacy of constitution, by his natural temperament, by the peculiarity of his home education, or by all these causes combined, it would be difficult to say. It was not carelessness, nor laziness; such terms as these could not be applied to one who studied so constantly, and gave himself up with so much earnestness to any favourite pursuit. Perhaps it was, that he often felt weary of a world which seemed to him to fall so far short of the bright ideal which he longed for. Perhaps it was as Mrs. Jefferson said, "The poor dear boy addled his brains by thinking about things which it would be quite time enough for him to know when he got to heaven."

She wished she could make Julian like other people, but saw no way of effecting so desirable a result. "And why should I wish it," she would add; "his dear father never was like other people; but was he not all the better fitted to go when his time came?"

Julian was not handsome; his features were irregular, his face thin and sallow, and not even relieved by the rich dark locks which generally accompany such a complexion, for his hair, although abundant, was light in colour, and not fine in texture.

Yet there was something in his countenance which is often more attractive than mere beauty or regularity of feature. This charm was in the varying expression, the bright sudden smile which would light up his face, making the change from grave to gay, from the look of careworn, anxious thought, to one of youthful joyousness, so sudden as almost to startle—

certainly to interest—any one in a countenance capable of such variety. His eyes, too, were good, clear, and expressive, having those large pupils which seem to lessen or dilate with every change of thought or feeling, and leave you always in doubt as to whether the eyes should be termed hazel, grey, or blue. In his boyhood he had been very delicate, and therefore perhaps he had been a little too much indulged, for few ever found fault with him or either asked him to do, or blamed him for not doing, more than he was himself disposed to perform, which was sometimes a great deal, sometimes nothing at all. But this was not well for him; he would have been a happier man had his feelings been more curbed and restrained, as he would not probably have suffered so much from the morbid feelings which are the almost invariable accompaniment of such a temperament as his.

Margaret Grey was almost the only person who ventured to find fault with him. He was very much attached to her; he could speak to her more freely than to any one else, and he told her all his joys and sorrows. Yet even she had not any influence in altering his peculiarities, or turning him from any course which he had chosen to adopt.

He received her advice always in good part, with a bright smile and a playful rejoinder, which implied that it was excellent advice for any one else, but did not suit him.

Mrs. Jefferson saw, with anxiety and alarm, the effect which his studious and sedentary life had on the still delicate constitution of her step-son, but her warnings and remonstrances were altogether unavailing.

He would promise to take more exercise, to go to bed earlier, to do anything that was required as soon as some particular task was ended; but when that time came there was sure to be something else in the way of his good resolutions, and he still continued to study far on into the small hours of the night. No fame nor learning, his mother thought, could compensate for the pale cheeks, the languid air, and the thoughtful, careworn look so unnatural at his early age. Fortunately he had inherited his father's love for flowers, and tending the conservatories, which he endeavoured to keep in their former beauty, furnished him with pleasant relaxation and agreeable employment.

This, with long walks up the mountains, amongst the glens, and beside the dark tarns of which he would spend whole days, were the only recreations which he allowed himself.

At Mr. Jefferson's death his estate had been equally divided between his twin sons, neither of whom, however, took much heed of their property, leaving it to the care of Richard Maunders, the steward, who, although willing, was scarcely able for such a charge. The estate, although including within its boundaries a great number of acres, lay principally along the bleak mountain side, and had never yielded a very considerable income, the tenants being for the most part labourers and farmers of the poorer class.

Nor was the value of the property increasing, as it might have done had its owners given it more attention. Captain Jefferson was seldom at home, and Julian cared little for such troublesome affairs.

"Kitty, dear," Mrs. Jefferson would sometimes say to her cousin, Miss Grant, "I often wish there was not such a thing as a fox or a book in the world. It would be far better for both the boys if they would look after their land, as their dear father used to do. I am sure his pursuits were of quite as much importance as theirs, and his heart was as much in them; yet he never forgot what were his duties to his family, his tenants, or any of the poor people. They are good boys as can be, none better. But the captain, when he is at home, is all for sports; or if he thinks of his estate, it is only to see that the foxes are undisturbed, or that his horses have every accommodation; while Julian, poor dear boy, thinks of nothing but books from morning to night. I fear he may write a book himself sometime, though, for my part, I think there are too many of them in the world already."

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### CHAPTER. III.

It was a cold March night, bleak and murky, sometimes raining, sometimes snowing, sometimes doing both at the same time, sometimes abstaining from either, but dark and disagreeable, whatever it did or did not do; and admitting of



comfort only in places from which the outer world was altogether excluded, by closely drawn blinds, and warm curtains, as was the case in the pretty little drawing-room of Dr. Grant's house, where the fire was blazing gaily, the lamp burning brightly, and everything looking as comfortable as might be. On the shining mahogany table were spread, besides the neat tea service of old fashioned china, a silver basket containing sweet biscuits, a glass dish filled with orange marmalade, a cold ham, and a stand for a hot cake yet to come, besides, of course, a sufficiency of fresh bread and neatly dressed butter; everything in fact which told of the near approach of a very substantial evening meal.

Six cups were laid on the tray, although as yet there were but two persons in the room.

These persons were Catherine—or Kitty Grant, as she was generally called—and her widowed sister, Sarah Stevens. We call them by their Christian names because being members of the "Society of Friends" they were generally so spoken of by their acquaintances. Kitty, the younger, had for many years superintended her nephew's house, first when he lived at Arranmore, a village on the sea coast, some seven or eight miles from Glarisford, and now, when he had removed to the immediate neighbourhood of the city itself. He had, through the patronage of the elder Mr. Jefferson, been appointed as dispensary doctor for a district skirting the town of Glarisford, and extending into the mountain country around and beyond Holybrook. This was not, so far, a very lucrative position, but there was hope of better, and his practice, although not large, was increasing, and likely to increase, as he was skilful in his profession, and might in all probability soon take the place of Dr. Townley, the principal physician of the place, who was now an old man, and in declining health.

Kitty Grant and her nephew had lived together now for many years, and had been both happy and comfortable, although their means were limited enough—Kitty's personal property being little more than sufficient to pay for the very plain and inexpensive apparel which she wore, and the Doctor possessing nothing except what he had saved, or could gain by his profession.

When, after her husband's death, Mrs. Stevens came to reside with her sister and nephew, the liberal sum which she paid for her board and lodging enabled them to keep a better house than they could otherwise have done, but her presence did not add much to the comfort of the household.

Dr. Grant's grandfather had been a physician too. He had resided in Dublin, and held no inconsiderable place in his profession, besides being a much respected and useful member of the "Society of Friends." He had been early left a widower, with one son and two daughters.

Sarah, the eldest, although she had at that time scarcely reached womanhood, had undertaken the management of her father's house, expending an almost superfluous amount of activity in the care of it, and of her young brother and sister.

The former, finding the cultivation of his mind and manners too closely attended to at home, avoided the paternal roof as much as possible; fell into company of which his family did not approve; married in a manner displeasing to them; and died young, leaving one son—the present Dr. Grant—to the care of his father and sisters.

Kitty could not escape so easily as her brother had done from the elder sister's oversight, nor did the meek-spirited girl ever wish to do so—at least if she did she never acknowledged the wish even to herself—but gave her own will up to Sarah, believing her to be "wisest, virtuous, discreetest, best," even when in her wisdom she almost broke poor Kitty's heart.

When Sarah Grant married, Kitty was for some time mistress of her father's house and of herself, but this state of freedom did not continue long, for the old man died within a few years, and it was then thought desirable that she should reside with her married sister.

The old doctor did not leave much property, for his practice, although extensive, had been chiefly amongst the poor, who requited him with little more substantial than their blessings.

Enough money was, however, left in the bank to pay for the education of the little grandson, and enough elsewhere—it was thought—to make Kitty independent for the remainder of her

life. But her portion was unfortunately left in shares which proved worse than useless, as the Great Dragon Steam Packet Company, *Unlimited*, in which she was a shareholder, became bankrupt, and she, with many others, lost all that she had, and was made liable for all that she might in future become possessed of. In these sad circumstances she took refuge with her sister, and for some years found a home in the house of her brother in law, Joseph Stevens.

As soon however as her nephew, John Grant, was grown up, and had entered on his profession, he begged Kitty to share his small house at Arranmore, and to undertake the oversight of his domestic affairs.

She gladly acceded to his wishes, and had resided with him ever since, through all changes and vicissitudes. He was the delight of her eyes, and in her eyes the most talented of men, as well as the best and most skilful of doctors. The whole aim and object of her life was to make his home happy and comfortable as far as lay in her power.

A relative had in the meantime left her a small annuity—only twenty pounds a year—but it was sufficient to pay for her spare and modest wardrobe, and also to meet her very limited travelling expenses.

Fortunately this money had not been left to her until after the Company was “wound up.”; still, Kitty feared that the all-devouring “Dragon” would hear of it, and she also had her doubts as to whether it might not be right for her to deliver up the small prey to the mighty ogre. Dr. Grant, however, told her that this was by no means necessary; and, even her cousin, Samuel Ward—whom she went to Dublin on purpose to consult—decided that such a course was not in “the line of her duty;” so Kitty’s conscience was relieved, although not entirely set at rest.

It had not, as we have said, added much to the comfort of either aunt or nephew, that at the death of Joseph Stevens, his widow had proposed coming to reside with them, yet they had not in any way objected to the proposition. Kitty simply could not oppose her sister in anything, and John Grant fancied that such an arrangement might be agreeable to both his aunts, and could make little difference to himself. He thought that Kitty would of course still remain

mistress of his house, and that Mrs. Stevens would be only a lodger or permanent visitor.

This, however, was very far from Mrs. Stevens' idea; she had always governed Kitty, and had no mind to make any change in this respect. In her youth, Sarah Grant had been handsome, and notwithstanding her rather delicate health, and her age, now nearer seventy than sixty, she was still a comely woman. She had a slim figure, good features, and a very clear complexion—a style of beauty rather helped than hindered by the extreme simplicity of her dress, which was of the neatest and plainest Quaker fashion. She had received many proposals of marriage, but she preferred the independence of single life and the duties which devolved upon her in her father's house, in keeping that good man, her sister, and the whole establishment in their proper places.

It was not until she was past forty that she married Joseph Stevens, a plain, substantial "friend," who made her an excellent husband, and at his death left her in very comfortable circumstances as regarded money matters. Her property was not in shares like that of her sister, but in houses in a thriving part of Glarisford. This had been an additional inducement to leave Dublin, where she had resided during her married life, and to fix her abode with her nephew. Her affairs were left in the hands of Samuel Ward, a distant cousin, but as he did not reside in Glarisford, Richard Maunders, the steward of the Holybrook estates had it in charge to collect her rents as soon as they became due. Monetary matters, therefore, did not give her much uneasiness.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

ON this March evening, on which our narrative commences, Samuel Ward was expected to arrive at Glarisford by the 6.30 train from Dublin. Dr. Grant had gone to meet him, and bring him to have his tea with his cousins, Sarah and Kitty, before he proceeded on his way to Holybrook Abbey.

Samuel Ward was also a Quaker, although brother to the present Mrs. Jefferson, who had joined the Church of England, to which her husband belonged. He was an elderly man,

very well to do as to money matters, for he had long been engaged in a thriving business—the more active duties of which he had of late years devolved upon a young relative—thus allowing himself more leisure for attending to a small fancy farm which he possessed near Dublin, and for long visits to his sister, which he much enjoyed, and besides looked upon as a kind of duty, for although Julius and Julian Jefferson had been of age for several years, he, as having been their guardian, still wished to watch over their affairs; and, indeed, felt an almost fatherly affection for the young men.

Margaret Grey, and her niece, Effie Walker, were also expected to take tea at Dr. Grant's house. None of the guests had yet arrived, and Mrs. Stevens was beginning to get very fidgety as the tea hour approached nearer and nearer.

"Dear, dear!" she exclaimed, putting her hands impatiently to her ears, while a gust of wind louder than before swept the rain against the window panes. "What a night it is for poor John to be out! for my part I think it would have been better for cousin Samuel to have driven straight to the Abbey."

"Poor dear John is accustomed to all weathers," said Kitty, with a sigh. "He does not mind, I am sure; and it will be so pleasant for us to see cousin Samuel and to hear about friends in Dublin. Besides, sister, thou wert saying thou wished to speak to him about thy property."

"It would be quite time enough to-morrow," said Mrs. Stevens, poking the already blazing fire. "What can be the reason that the girls don't come? When I was their age I should have thought nothing of walking that short distance."

"I think they will be here; still, sister; I told them we would not have tea till after seven."

"That was altogether uncalled for in thee, Kitty; they are quite inclined to be late without thy encouraging them. I think, too, that they would be better at home such an evening as this; but they ought to have written a note to say that they were not coming."

"Perhaps they may do so: one would scarcely wish them to venture out such an evening."

"It's not a quarter of a mile from this to George Grey's. It seems to me that the young people of these times are losing

the use of their limbs. It is twenty minutes to seven, and they might very well be here. Go and see if the cake is doing well, and tell Anne on no account to let the fire get too hot."

Kitty was as obedient to her sister at fifty-six as she had been at sixteen, when she had been almost a child, and Sarah quite a woman. She went at once, as directed, to see that the cake was being properly baked, and soon returned with a favourable report, but found Mrs. Stevens becoming every moment more acrimonious. None of the guests had yet arrived, and the hands of the time-piece were going steadily on their way, notwithstanding the frequent glances of disapprobation which were cast upon it.

"Ah! there is a knock at the hall door at last," exclaimed Kitty, rising joyfully; "that must be the girls themselves and not a note only."

"They might better have written to say that they would not come," said Mrs. Stevens. "Now poor John will have to take them home to-night, when probably the storm will be much worse than it is at present. It is very hard to him to be obliged to go out again after he has taken off his boots. Don't leave that door open, Kitty, I feel a cold creeping on me,"—and the old lady drew her shawl more closely around her as if the expected blast had already entered, while Kitty carefully shut the room door before the outer one was opened.

And now there was a sound of pleasant voices as the two guests, Margaret Grey and Effie Walker, entered the hall and began to emerge from under the weight of cloaks and shawls, which had been a necessary defence against the sleet and rain of the inclement night.

"Won't you come upstairs to arrange your hair, my dears?" asked Miss Grant: "though, indeed," she added, "there is no occasion, for you look as tidy as if you had come out of two band-boxes. There's not one plait of Margaret's hair out of place. Dost thou know, dear, thy hair always reminds me of a brown satin turt dress which I had once; it had a kind of plaited trimming round the sleeves, which was so pretty, but sister thought it too much of a variety, and so I took it off. And, Effie dear, thy hair looks very nice and tidy, too."

"As well as circumstances will admit," said Effie, smiling, while with a little white hand on each side of her head she

smoothed her thick, fair hair. I hope we have not kept Mrs. Stevens' tea waiting."

"Oh no, my dear. John is not come yet; he went to the train to meet cousin Samuel, and they could not be here till seven, although sister seems to expect them sooner."

Mrs. Stevens received the girls in rather a doubtful manner, her mind being still undecided, as to whether they should or should not have come. She was sure they must have caught cold in coming, or would do so in returning. Said they might have come earlier; as, when she was young, she would have thought nothing of such a short walk in any weather. Then she shuddered at the damp air which they had brought in with them; poked the fire; was sure Anne was burning the cake, and also that as it was now ten minutes to seven the said cake could not be baked in time for tea.

Margaret Grey was four-and-twenty when we first knew her ten years ago; she looked more than four-and-thirty now, although her hair was as dark and glossy as ever, and her forehead was still unmarked by the furrows which care and time will trace. But she had become very thin, and the bright colour which once glowed in her cheeks had faded quite away. Such a terrible and sudden overthrow of hope and happiness, as it had been her lot to bear, could not but leave sad traces. And yet there was an expression in her countenance which almost compensated for the change. There is a gentleness and tranquility of mien which nothing but sorrow, borne patiently, and passed through reverently, can bestow. You saw it in the meek, almost touching expression of her eyes, in the pensive brow and quiet smile, and something in the very tones of her voice told of it too. There had been a time when it had seemed that either Margaret's life or reason must have given way; yet both had been spared, and she had come out of the furnace of affliction with a heart not broken, but softened; and, although scars remained, which in this world might never be fully healed, and her once buoyant spirits were saddened and subdued, she had learned lessons deep and holy which joy never teaches. And there was much of happiness left to her still. She tried to find pleasure in the joys of others, and to interest herself in "the daily round, the common care;" the trifles which, however insignificant they

may appear, make up the sum of pleasure and discomfort in most of our lives. She had not been unsuccessful so far as her own happiness was concerned, and she had added much to the happiness of others.

The second ten years of life will, in general, make a much more striking change than the third. We left Effie Walker a timid child of ten years old; we find her now a gentle, happy little woman of twenty; small still, for she wanted six inches of woman's average height of five feet four: not handsome either. Mrs. Stevens, who considered herself a judge of such matters, said she was not even pretty. Few, however, who knew Effie well would have agreed with this verdict. Her light flaxen hair was not particularly glossy, but it was plentiful and always neatly arranged. Her complexion, although fair, was rather indistinct, and yet whatever colour she wore, blue, green, pink, or purple, dark or light, all became her equally well, and she looked well in all.

She had blue eyes, mild, but with much expression, a nose of no particular order, and as sweet a mouth as ever smiled. Yet we must not give that mouth all the credit either, for the blue eyes smiled along with it, and both together lighted up the face with an expression of gentle kindliness which few could resist. To know Effie Walker was to love her. She had been spending the winter at her grandfather's for the purpose of receiving music lessons in Glarisford, and was not to return to her own home until after Fanny Grey's marriage.

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## CHAPTER V.

TEN minutes to seven, five minutes, then the time-piece gave the warning, while Mrs. Stevens rose, and stretching her head forward frowned at it; but the unfeeling combination of wheels and springs took its accustomed course, and in three minutes more struck the hour.

"The train must be in, some time, and it is very thoughtless of John to delay in this way, keeping poor cousin Samuel out in the bitter night air."

"But, you know, Mrs. Stevens," said Effie, in a conciliatory



tone, "a doctor's time is always uncertain. Dr Grant may have been detained by an accident."

"Accident!" exclaimed Mrs. Stevens, frowning severely, as she turned her eyes full upon Effie, "Dost thou say there has been an accident—a railway accident?"

"Oh! no," replied Effie, who, amused by Mrs. Stevens' misapprehension of her words, could with difficulty avoid laughing, "I only thought that some one might have met with an accident, and that Dr. Grant might have been detained."

"Nothing of the kind. If there had been any accident we should have heard of it long ago; ill news flies fast. I suppose Samuel Ward did not come, and John is loitering about somewhere, seeing patients who could very well wait till morning, or may be don't want him at all. He knows how I suffer for want of my tea in the evening."

"Hadn't we better have in the urn, sister? John won't mind our beginning without him."

"Well, Kitty," replied Mrs. Stevens, with asperity. "I mind sitting down to tea without the master of the house, if thou dost not. It is a thing I never would do, and if I can wait, I think those who are younger may wait also."

"Oh! dear, yes," said Kitty, meekly, "I was only afraid thou might be the worse."

"No doubt I shall be the worse, but I do not suppose that John or any one else considers my health."

"That is Dr. Grant's knock, surely," said Effie, as a summons, commencing with a succession of small taps, and becoming more and more imperative, till it ended in one loud determined stroke, sounded upon the hall door knocker.

"Ef-f-f-f!" exclaimed Mrs. Stevens, with a long inspiration, "it is almost deafening. How can he be so thoughtless? Such a knock might be the means of killing a nervous patient."

The entrance of Samuel Ward and Dr. Grant, was, for a time at least, as oil upon the troubled waters of Sarah Stevens' mind; for a while she lost sight of her grievances, for they were both men of a cheerful aspect, calculated to dispel gloom. Dr. Grant's pleasant face had not changed very much during the last ten years; it was perhaps more florid, and the beard was certainly longer and thicker; his figure, too, was stouter, but his bright black eyes were the same, and his high forehead

was as smooth as ever—too high it was, aunt Kitty thought, for although he was but in his thirty-sixth year, the marginal line dividing the face from the hair was gradually receding, and the top of the head was bald and shining, beyond the reach of Rowland's Kalydor, or even of the wonderful solutions of box-wood, rosemary, &c., which she had so often prepared, and entreated him, almost with tears, to apply to keep the "nice black hair from falling out."

"An uncommonly wild night, and I may say a very high wind," said Samuel Ward, as after the usual salutations had passed, he aired himself before the blazing fire. "Not at all disagreeable to get within doors. What dost thou say, John?"

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Ward," replied Dr. Grant, "but take this seat, and you will be more comfortable."

Samuel Ward seated himself, and first stretching one hand, then the other, toward the genial blaze, expressed the comfort he thus received, by a long, "Ah-h!" of satisfaction.

He was a stout, hale man, of about sixty years of age, fresh and comely in his appearance. His hair was very white, but with that peculiar tinge which showed that its hue had in youth been more than auburn. His ruddy cheeks and chin were closely shaved, and there was neither beard nor whisker apparent above the large white muslin handkerchief which encircled his neck in voluminous folds. His forehead and bald crown partook of the same roseate hue as his cheeks, contrasting well with the fringe of soft white locks, which grew round the head, and a little overhung the high coat collar. His dress was of the plainest Quaker style—a comfortable, worthy-looking style now seldom to be seen. The coat of a dark brown or olive green, capacious and yet well fitting; the collar moderately high, lined with a small piece of black velvet, but neither turned down nor cut into any unnecessary shapes; from just below the chin, where the velvet ended somewhat abruptly, the front of the coat took a gentle curve, first outward, until it reached the region of the heart, thence falling away gradually to its termination, the slope being just sufficient to save the garment from any suspicion of being intended for a frock coat—an article of dress which the good man would have, to say the least, thought very much "out of place" on himself.

He wore neat, fawn-coloured shorts, very fine grey woollen stockings, and high, well polished shoes, all of which showed a remarkably well shaped foot and leg to the best advantage. Mr. Ward was not a man of many words, but he was generally thought to have a "long head," and to be very shrewd in business matters. He had certainly managed his own affairs well, and made for himself a very comfortable independence.

It would not be easy to over-estimate the opinion formed by Mrs. Jefferson and Kitty Grant of his sense and judgment; they believed him to be one of the cleverest of men, and applied to him for advice and support in all their difficulties. As to Mrs. Stevens, she had not a very high opinion of any one, but though Samuel Ward did not escape from the disapprobation which she felt for mankind in general, she was willing to allow that he was a "tolerably sensible, and well concerned friend."

"I'm glad to see that thou art still able to collect some young people about thee, Sarah," he said, looking slightly over his shoulder toward the table beside which Dr. Grant, Margaret Grey, and Effie Walker were standing. "I hope thy father is pretty well, Margaret. Does he suffer as much as formerly from rheumatism?"

"Yes," replied Miss Grey, "I am sorry to say that he often suffers much, but he is always very patient."

"Dear, dear! very patient, yes, yes! And may I ask thee where he is now? With thy brother at the Mills, or at the house near here?"

"He is spending this week with Wilfred and Julia, but he and I live as usual at Rose Cottage, about a quarter of a mile from this."

"A quarter of a mile—yes; thy father, I daresay, inclines to be near a medical man, like John, here."

"That is a doubtful privilege, I fear," said Dr. Grant, "but it is a great pleasure to us that Mr. Grey has settled so near Glarisford. Rose Cottage is scarcely a quarter of a mile from this; not more than half a quarter. Is it?"

"Ah-h! not more than half a quarter. Dear, dear!" and the old man stretched both hands towards the blaze, repeating softly, "Not more than half a quarter," as if it were a subject worthy of much consideration.

"Thou might tell us something about friends in Dublin, Samuel," said Mrs. Stevens, impatiently, "George Grey is just as he was when thou wert here last, and living in the same place. John, I wish thou wouldst slice the ham, thou hast kept us waiting for our tea long enough already."

"I would have brought the train into town earlier if I could, aunt," replied Dr. Grant, as he sharpened one knife with another, preparatory to cutting the ham. We came as fast as we could from the terminus. Did we not, Mr. Ward? There was not much temptation to stay out such a night as this. However, I hope you are not the worse for waiting for us, aunt."

"I cannot tell, I am not the better, at all events," said Mrs. Stevens, drawing her shawl round her with both her hands, and at the same time frowning with distress at the knife sharpening. Then as Dr. Grant commenced slicing the ham, she told him to be careful and not to look about him, or he would surely cut his finger; desired Kitty to go out and butter the cake; wished Margaret and Effie would put up their work; said she was sure Samuel Ward would get chilblains on his hands if he held them so close to the fire; and finally seated herself at the tea-table, announcing in a melancholy voice that she had no appetite left, and was sure there was a cold hanging about her for which nothing would have been so good as an early tea.

However, Samuel Ward's company, the news which he brought of their distant friends, combined with the pleasing influences of strong tea, and excellent hot cake, had an effect both cheering and reviving, so that when the table was cleared, Mrs. Stevens was able to give her mind to deep consideration as to the colours which were suitable for an Affghan blanket which Effie Walker was about to "set up" for her.

Samuel Ward, tired by his journey, sat in an armchair by the fire dozing, yet now and then endeavouring to clear himself from such an imputation by opening his eyes with effort, looking toward the workers and saying, that it was really wonderful how much women could do with two little needles.

Dr. Grant seated himself beside Margaret Grey; he wished to tell her of some poor people near Holybrook, in whom she was interested, and whom he had that day visited. These were the family of Christie Ryan, who had formerly been

gardener at Holybrook Mills, but who had for some years been in ill-health, and was now dying of a lingering and painful disease.

He and his wife lived in a cottage not far from the Abbey, and his son Peter, who followed no trade, did no work, but lived one way or other, also occupied a miserable little cabin on Captain Jefferson's estate, almost the only human habitation on the wild lands of Iveagh, which lay along the foot of Knockduff Mountain. Dr. Grant frequently visited Christie, doing for him all that a physician could; and the families, both at the Abbey and the Mills, were very kind to him; but it was not in the power of any much to succour the dying man, as long as his wife Nance was his attendant, and his son Peter had the freedom of his house.

"This must be the car for you," said Dr. Grant, turning to Samuel Ward, as a conveyance stopped at the gate, and a loud knock, like that of a postman, was heard at the hall door.

"That is Maunders, I am sure; he has come to see you safe home."

"Ah-h! Richard Maunders; yes!" said Samuel Ward, opening his eyes, and trying to collect himself and look as sagacious as he could—the fact being that he did not at first quite remember where he was. "Richard Maunders! yes, to be sure: I had closed my eyes for a moment."

"Thou hast been sleeping soundly, Cousin Samuel," said Sarah Stevens.

"Ah, sleeping; dear, dear! Half-past nine," he continued, drawing from his old-fashioned fob a watch, to which was attached by a piece of broad, brown, silky material, a large gold key and a bunch of seals. "Didst thou say anything about Richard Maunders, John?"

"Yes, sir, and here he comes to speak for himself," replied the doctor, as the door was thrown open, and there entered a very portly middle-aged man, dressed from head to foot in roughish grey cloth, which showed to the greatest advantage the unusual stoutness and rotundity of his figure.

His face was very broad, and very red, but it was a good countenance, well-featured and agreeable in its expression. His hair and whiskers were light, and his eyes were very pale blue, and yet with much keen shrewdness in their glance.

Advancing into the room with short, ponderous steps, he saluted the company there assembled, in a manner which, without appearing in any way to lower the estimation in which he held himself, showed that he knew all present were his superiors in rank; and then seated himself solidly on a chair which Mrs. Stevens pointed out to him. This was Richard Maunders, who was employed as agent or confidential steward by Captain and Mr. Jefferson. Both these gentlemen disliking business of any kind, left their estates, and almost all their worldly affairs, under his control. It was well for them that he was an honest and well-intentioned man. His father had been land steward at Holybrook before him, and he was much attached to the Jefferson family. He had been married, but was now a childless widower. He had a good salary, lived in a snug house beside the farm buildings of the Abbey, and said he had but two things to complain of, his asthma and the loss of his poor wife Jane; but added, that "as no man could have everything, it did not so much matter."

"A wild night still, I believe, Richard," said Samuel Ward, addressing the new comer.

"Aye, sir," replied Maunders, in deep guttural tones; "it's raining cats and dogs."

"Raining heavily, perhaps thou meant to say, rainin' heavily."

"Aye, sir; it's coming down like blazes."

"Dear, dear, Richard; thy expressions seem to be unnecessarily strong."

"Faith, sir, you mightn't think so if you were out in it."

"Well, well. Didst thou bring a covered conveyance?"

"Yes, sir; the mistress sent her own little brougham, and Dan has it round to shelter while you're getting ready. One of the young gentlemen would have come for you, only that Mr. Julian, as is his custom, was too busy with his books, and the Captain's dining at the castle. Him and the Marquis are as thick as pickpockets; they're both so keen after the foxes, you see, sir."

"Ah! then Julius continues to hunt?"

"Aye, sir, and a fine sight it is to see him going out for a day's sport; as handsome a young man as you'd see in the whole country side."

"Handsome, yes ; takes after his poor mother. Still, I could wish him a better employment than hunting the poor animals which were given to us for better purposes."

"Well, as to that," said the steward, drumming upon the table with his plump fingers, and rather puzzled for a suitable reply, "there's not many of 'em left in the country, either for better or worse. The Captain is very keen to get more."

"Has he any success in bringing the foxes to Iveagh?" asked Dr. Grant.

"No, sir, nor won't as long as Peter Ryan's in the old shanty. And, by the way, Doctor, the mistress told me to tell you that she'd thank you the next time you're visiting Christie, just to step on and see that poor wife of Peter's ; she's fadin' off like a snow-drift, and no one can make out whether it's sick or sore-hearted she is. She's as scared as a weazel whenever I go near the place ; to my thinking she'll go wrong in the head living there with Peter, in that old desolation of a pigstye. Peter drinks like a fish, and I doubt he's hard on her when he's in liquor. If Master Julian 'd get him over to Ballynock, and Father Drumgoole would have an eye to him, it would be his only chance. There's no one knows the length of his foot only Master Julian, but then *he's* so lapped up in books and curiosities, and all them things, he has no time for the like."

"I'll call to see Peg the next time I'm in that neighbourhood," said Dr. Grant ; "but Peter's a bad subject, and a doctor has no control over wife beating."

"The Captain says he won't stand it no longer, and that I must put Peter out of Iveagh without benefit of clargy. I'll try an' do it, but some things is easier said nor done. I doubt Christie's not long for this world, is he, Doctor?"

"No, poor man, I hope not ; he has a suffering time of it."

"Poor Christie !" said Samuel Ward. "I recollect him quite a decent man, and in comparatively comfortable circumstances. And dost thou think, Richard, that Julian might be the means of reforming Peter?"

"Well, as to reforming him, sir, I couldn't say. He might get him to move out of Iveagh, perhaps, without making any more row ; but to my thinking, you might as well whistle jigs to a milestone as think to reform the likes of him."

"Dear, dear !—and does the poor creature drink?"

"Aye, sir, that he does. I seen him going home this evening, and the breadth of the road was a far greater trouble to him nor the length of it; but that's not the worst of him, he's jest an infarnal rascal whatever way you take him."

"Dear, dear!—an inferior man, perhaps thou means to say. I should really be obliged to thee, Richard, not to use these strong expressions."

"Well, sir, well, take it which way you will; but what I say's the fact, for all that."

"Ah!" said Samuel Ward, thoughtfully, as he looked into the fire; "Yes, it may be so. It would be very satisfactory, if the dear young men would look after their estates and tenantry a little more. Their father was a superior man—a very superior man."

"Still, I never could see how thou could think it right to allow thy sister Charlotte to marry a person not in profession with us," said Mrs. Stevens, looking up suddenly from her knitting.

"Well, thou sees, cousin Sarah, Charlotte was quite of an age to judge for herself, and having been governess in the family for some time, she was better able than I could have been to judge of Arthur Jefferson's character."

"Where thou took the false step was in allowing her to go to Holybrook Abbey at all. My Joseph thought it imprudent at the time, and if thou hadst taken his advice, things might have turned out differently."

"Might have turned out differently; yes, might have turned out differently," repeated Samuel Ward, complacently, as he stretched his neat shoes and long grey stockings towards the fire. "Yes, Arthur Jefferson was a superior man."

"H-m!" said Mrs. Stevens, "he may have been well enough in his place. I am sure I don't pretend to know much about these things, but I think very little of the way Julian spends his time; and there was his mother's brother, Gilbert Mansfield, we used to hear of his talents and his genius, and his taste for the fine arts, and all such foolish things: and what did it all come to in the end? I am sure he was of no use in the world, one way or other."

"Well, as to that, Sarah, I think thou art going a little too far," said Samuel Ward. "Gilbert was, I believe, an amiable



as well as a talented young man ; and we are led to believe that every person has their appointed place, and their use in the world "

"Ought to have, perhaps thou means to say," said Mrs. Stevens ; and she would have continued in the same strain, but that Samuel Ward changed the subject by beginning to speak of her own business matters.

Kitty Grant had started and become very nervous, she could scarcely continue her work, for the unexpected mention of Gilbert Mansfield's name, although she had not seen him since she was quite young, and he had been dead many a long year, still caused her painful agitation—for he had been her first and, indeed, only love.

Kitty was fifty-six now, plain, wrinkled, and grey-headed ; a quiet, unpretending little old maid, who looked as if her mission in life was to knit stockings, to work patiently at the making and mending of garments, and to see to housekeeping generally without a thought or interest beyond. Nevertheless, there had been a time when she had been, if not handsome, at least young and good-looking, and also rather more romantic and full of sentiment, than even young people are now-a-days.

In that time, long ago, she had met Gilbert Mansfield, of whom her sister spoke. He had loved Kitty, and Kitty had loved him, and but for Mrs. Stevens' care they would have been married, and might have been a happy couple even to this day. But Sarah persuaded her father, and really believed herself, that a marriage with a person not a member of their own Society was a grievous sin.

Kitty did not think so herself, but she would not disobey her father, nor the sister whom she believed knew what was right and wrong so much better than she did ; so, although she loved the young man with all her heart, she told him that she could never be his wife.

He was as much attached to her at the time as she was to him ; but he had many more objects to occupy his mind and to divert his thoughts. Seeing that the matter was hopeless, he had given it up ; had gone to India, married there, and, after some years, returned to Ireland, a widower with only one daughter—a sickly child of six or seven years old, whom he

left in the charge of her mother's relatives, intending to go abroad again himself, first, however, coming to spend some time with his sister's family at Holybrook Abbey.

How this visit terminated, and Gilbert Mansfield, with the greater part of the crew and passengers of the "Hypolita" met their death in that "dread scene of frost, and fire, and moaning sea," when the great vessel rushed flaming to her destruction, amidst Biscay's wild waves, has been before related. Kitty had never met him after their first parting, and, although she fondly cherished his memory, she had taught herself to think of her early love as of some bright unreal vision.

Her heart had been almost broken, but she hoped "all had been ordered for the best;" felt that the light had faded from her life; but took up the heavy cross, and went meekly along the dreary road which her humble faith told her was leading to a better country.

In later years she had had other suitors, members of her own sect, who might have been thought eligible, but in some way or other, perhaps not always intentionally, her sister Sarah put a stop to every matrimonial project, and Kitty did not care.

The old romance was not, however, quite crushed out of her heart; it would waken up still, even for herself, in sweet thoughts and memories of by-gone days; and for others it was as fresh and green as it had ever been. Nothing gave her so much pleasure as a "little love affair," and it was a continual trouble to her that her nephew appeared to be fast growing into a confirmed old bachelor. She loved and admired him so much herself, that she believed there were few hearts so hard as to be able to resist attentions from John, if he would only try. She knew that he had once proposed for Margaret Grey, but also knew that she had refused his suit. And yet she could neither wonder at, nor blame this hardness of heart, even when evinced toward her beloved nephew; for had not Theodore Jefferson resembled her Gilbert so closely, both in form and mind, as to make it no problem to her why Margaret should find it difficult to love again.

## CHAPTER VI.

MISS GRANT was an early riser. There were many household matters to be seen to, and the hour before breakfast was the most satisfactory time for this purpose—the only part of the day, indeed, in which she was free from Mrs. Stevens' oversight. Besides, Dr. Grant's breakfast should always be ready at eight o'clock, and if she did not call Anne Dempsey, the servant, and watch her well when called, this was not likely to be accomplished; for Anne had never been clever at her work, and showed no signs of amendment—indeed was growing worse, which deterioration Mrs. Stevens attributed, not without cause, to the fact of her being courted by the butcher's boy, the baker down street, or Dan Corr, the doctor's groom, or possibly all three together. However this might be, she did not attend sufficiently to her work, dressed too well, sang songs when she should have been scouring tables, and stood at the back door when she ought to have been sweeping the rooms.

Dr. Grant had been called up in the night, and Kitty, anxious that he should have a particularly comfortable breakfast, hastened out to the yard to send Dan Corr to the baker's for some fresh muffins. Dan, however, was not a man to overwork himself, and on the plea of having risen at 2 a.m. to clean down the doctor's horse, was still asleep, and all raps at his door were replied to only by loud and prolonged snoring.

So, in despair, and greatly fearing a lecture from Mrs. Stevens, she despatched Anne to the butcher and the baker to procure the needful supply of muffins and sausages, and returned to the breakfast-parlour to finish the preparations which the servant had not had time to complete.

Spreading the snowy cloth on the table, she laid on it the neat dove-coloured china, the urn-rug which she had herself worked in a curiously tufted pattern, the well-polished knives and forks, and the pretty china cake stand. Then she drew from her pocket her own bright bunch of keys, and repaired to the tall white cupboard in the china closet, from the top shelf of which she took a crock of marmalade, carefully selecting it from among many others, and seeing that it bore the right

mark in her own handwriting—"The marmalade which J. prefers."

Anne Dempsey remained out rather longer than was absolutely necessary for procuring the articles for which she was sent, yet there was sufficient time to heat the muffins and fry the sausages; and all was ready as the clock struck eight.

Mrs. Stevens was ready too, and entered the parlour wrapping her grey Thibet shawl about her, and complaining of the "rawness of the morning." Eight o'clock was rather an early hour for her; but the doctor must breakfast early, and his aunt, very contrary to his desire, "sacrificed" herself to be with him at his first meal.

"Dear heart!" she exclaimed, as shiveringly she advanced to the blazing fire, "What miserable weather this is!"

"Quite as fine as we can expect in third month, sister," said Miss Grant, cheerfully; "and much more healthful than the bitter east winds. Dost not thou see how brightly the sun is shining after the rain, and the borders look quite gay with crocuses and hepaticas."

"It is a very bad sign to have the flowers out so much as they are now. All the rest of the year suffers from an early spring. Where is John? He does not care what efforts I make to be up in time for his breakfast. Is he in bed still?"

"I think he is not up yet."

"Dear, dear! If he indulges this way in the morning, he will become quite lethargic. I see him growing stouter and stouter every day."

"He was out very late last night. Just after thou went to bed, a boy came in from the country to tell him Christie Ryan was dying, and he had to go out to Iveagh."

"Oh my! Is poor Christie gone at last?"

"No; he was better before John got there."

"I don't doubt it," said Mrs. Stevens, with asperity.

"And then," continued Kitty, "there was a child, near Ballynock, ill with the croup, and poor John had to drive out there, so he was not home till after two this morning."

"H-m," said Mrs. Stevens, "they don't care how they disturb him; I have no doubt they could all have waited well

enough until morning. No constitution could bear this continued disturbance at night. I am sure he will break down before long."

Dr. Grant now entered the room, looking fresh and cheery, and not appearing as if there was any immediate danger either of his breaking down, or becoming lethargic, but in a great hurry for his breakfast, which was quite ready, and the little party seated themselves at the table.

Mrs. Stevens had looked scrutinisingly at both muffins and sausages, and was just about to inquire how they had been procured, and Kitty was in a state of some alarm, wondering how she could justify herself for having sent Anne into the jaws of the lions, when the gate of the little court before the house was opened, and Captain Jefferson, mounted on his beautiful hunter, and equipped in full hunting costume, rode up to the window.

"The top of the morning to you, Doctor," he cried, as John Grant threw open the window to speak to him. "Isn't this a glorious day? Just saddle your mare, and come along with me."

"I'd look well, I'm sure, riding over the country, breaking my own back and my horse's into the bargain. No, Julius, even if I had not more serious affairs to attend to, I'm growing a thought too heavy for such work."

"Not a bit of it; I'm sure the Marquis is a good stone heavier than you."

"Yes; but the Marquis can suit his horses to his weight, while I have only Black Sally. Where is the meet?"

"Not far from Arranmore. You might see a patient or two *en passant*."

"Oh, John!" exclaimed Mrs. Stevens in muffled tones, her handkerchief being held tightly over her mouth. "How canst thou be so thoughtless as to let in the damp air in that way when thou knows I have a cold hanging about me."

"I beg your pardon, aunt, I am very sorry; but the sun was shining in so brightly, and I did not know you had a cold," said Dr. Grant, as he closed the window.

"Didst not thou know that I took palegoric elixir going to bed last night?"

"I did not, indeed, aunt; but I hope you'll take no more of it."

"Tell Julius to come in; I want to ask him how cousin Samuel got home last night."

"Come in for a moment, Captain," said the doctor, opening the hall door. "Dan will hold your horse. Here Dan!"

"Dan's a snorin' still, sir," said Anne Dempsey, appearing at the kitchen door and speaking in rather dolorous tones. "I went to call him in to breakfast and he gave me nothin' only imperence, sir, and said I might pit Miss Kitty's new cozy over the teapot for another hour, for he wouldn't get up;" and the girl applied the corner of her neat white apron to her eyes.

"Lazy, good-for-nothing fellow," exclaimed the doctor, hastening out into the yard and uttering some expressions which Samuel Ward might have designated as "stronger than were necessary."

Captain Jefferson tied his horse to the railing of the court before the door and entered the breakfast parlour, where he was welcomed by both old ladies, although Mrs. Stevens could not help telling him that he should not have left his great horse in the court by itself, as it would scrape up all the gravel which Dan had raked the day before.

"And it's very well for Dan to have to rake it again to-day," said the doctor, re-entering the room. "The lazy lout! he doesn't do one stroke of work that he can possibly avoid; but I've given him a scolding that I hope will last him for this week and the next."

"I wish thou knew how disagreeable he is when thou art from home, John," said Mrs. Stevens. "It is almost impossible to get him up in the morning. I often pity poor Anne having to call him so often, and when he is up he's no manner of use, but stands smoking and gossiping at the back door."

"John, my dear, thy coffee will be cold," said Kitty Grant.

"All right," said the doctor, seating himself at the table. "I haven't a minute to lose."

"Take a cup, Julius, won't thou? it is strong and might keep thy head steady if thou must ride out after the poor foxes."

"Thank you, aunt Kitty, I've seen nine houses since I breakfasted before, so I suppose I may indulge in a cup of

your coffee, which looks excellent. I think your cream is thicker than ours at the Abbey."

"Dear, dear! now isn't that wonderful, and you have so many cows? Ten or twelve, I suppose?"

"I daresay we have, but I never see them. I hear my mother and Maunders discussing their merits sometimes."

"How are the foxes at Iveagh?" asked Dr. Grant.

"Foxes," repeated Captain Jefferson; "there's not a fox at Iveagh now: they won't venture there while that Ryan and his pack of curs remain in the cabin close by. I'd have had him out of it long ago only for that poor little wife of his: but they must be dislodged now; there are plenty of houses for them to go to, and I've told Maunders so."

"I doubt that's easier said than done, Captain; Ryan's a bad subject. There would be room enough for him to live with his father; or, perhaps, you'd better let him alone till the old man dies—he's not long for this world."

"Old Nance is the worst of the whole brood," said the Captain; "she is always pilfering about the Abbey; coming as she says for my mother's salves and lotions for her husband."

"Christie won't want them much longer," said Dr. Grant; "I thought he would have died last night, and I must go out to see him now."

"Ah, my!" said aunt Kitty, with a sigh. She believed that a blessing would follow her nephew's ministrations among the poor, but she *did* wish he could get a few wealthy patients also. "And hast thou no one to visit to-day except thy dispensary patients?"

"The Marquis wishes to see me at eleven o'clock," said Dr. Grant, smiling. "Does that please you better, aunt?"

"The Marquis, my dear!" she exclaimed, whilst her countenance brightened, and anticipations of what might be the result of this first summons to Glarisford Castle crowded through her brain.

The Marquis of Glarisford was a wise man, and surely, she thought, he had only to know her nephew to appreciate his great talents; and might not John before long become the first physician in the town?

"I suppose poor dear Dr. Townley is growing almost too old to go out much now?"

"Oh, not at all! but he has an attack of the gout."

"Poor man! And Julius, my dear," she continued, turning to Captain Jefferson: "Julius, my dear, was the poor Marquis not able to appear at his dinner-table last night?"

"He was as well as ever I saw him," replied Julius; "but I heard some of the little lords or ladies were indisposed, and some one told Lady Glarisford that there was not a doctor in the town or neighbourhood who understood children's complaints so well as Dr. Grant."

"I hope they won't expect too much, and be disappointed," said Mrs. Stevens, while Kitty's face flushed with pleasure. "And are the family likely to remain long at the Castle?" she asked. It was only right and best that children should get through whooping cough, measles, etc., early in life, and who could attend the Marquis' family through the diseases incidental to childhood better than her John?

"I heard they were likely to remain some time longer," replied Captain Jefferson. "Lord Carlisle is coming down in April or May, and there are to be grand doings at the Castle. Who can tell whether he may not break a bone or dislocate a shoulder, and have Dr. Grant to attend him. I'll recommend you, Doctor. Whew! what torture you put me to in the Dead Man's Cave, the first time I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance! I can tell you you did not gain much upon my affections that night." This, Captain Jefferson said in allusion to a very adventurous expedition which he and Ellen Walker, when children, had made to a cave beneath one of the headlands near Arranmore; which, on account of the perils with which it was surrounded, was called the Dead Man's Cave, and was very rarely visited, either by the most daring climbers or the most experienced boatmen. Julius had fallen down the rocks, receiving some very serious injuries; and it had been with great difficulty that he and his companion had been either reached, or rescued.

"I did very well for you, Julius," replied the doctor, "and I take credit to myself whenever I look at your stately bearing: as Maunders says, in his own choice language, 'The Captain is set on his legs like a new table!'"

"Oh! but," said Aunt Kitty, "don't talk of such a thing



as the Lord Lieutenant dislocating his joints. It isn't right."

"You think we are plotting a treason, Aunt Kitty," said Julius. "Something nearly as bad as imagining the Queen's death: but you know Lord Carlisle patronises and encourages genius of all kinds, and being, besides, such a benevolent man, he might willingly suffer something for the sake of drawing such talents from obscurity. Never fear, Aunt Kitty, we'll see Sir John Grant living in Merriion Square yet, and driving to the Castle with his own carriage and pair."

"John may understand something of surgery," said Mrs. Stevens, "but he will never rise in his profession till he is a little more thoughtful about his patients,—”and she coughed several times.

"I hope you haven't got cold from the open window, aunt?"

"I can't tell yet," said Mrs. Stevens, drawing her shawl round her; "my dear father has frequently told me that it is impossible to tell just at first where a draught from a window may strike a delicate person."

"But when there was no draught, I think it must make a difference. Take another muffin, aunt. I must be off now. Are you going my road, Captain?"

"Yes," replied Julius, rising; and taking leave of the old ladies, they left the room together.

Kitty sat over her breakfast lost in pleasant musings on what yet might be. "Why should not dear John—the cleverest doctor she ever knew, except her father, who, of course, being older, was cleverer still—rise to the highest pinnacle of his profession? He was not a member of the Society of Friends, poor fellow, either, so there could be no objection to his accepting a baronetcy if it were pressed upon him." Thus she mused, until seeing Mrs. Stevens turn over with a fork the sausage which still remained on the dish, she pushed her chair back and hastened into the hall, saying, she "must see that John had his coat and rug."

The doctor had just taken the reins from his groom, and with a word of encouragement to his mare, Black Sally, a tall, thin, ill-tempered animal, but much valued for her swiftness, had driven out of the little court.

"Did thy master take his coat and rug, Dan?" asked Kitty, as she looked after her nephew.

"What would he want of a rug, Miss? Hasn't the gig an apron?" replied Dan, putting a bit of twine into his mouth and chewing it leisurely.

"But art thou sure he took his coat?"

"Aye, I seen a big coat on 'im."

"Did the Captain go with him?"

"Aye, they're both stopping at Mr. Grey's," answered Dan, shading his eyes with his hands and looking up the road which led from Glarisford to Holybrook.

"Thou must be mistaken, Dan, for Julius said he was going to Arranmore, which is quite in the other direction."

"Sure he has a fine baste under him, and can direct whichever way he likes after him, and the masher's done courtin' Miss Margot and Miss Effie."

"Tut! tut! Dan. I wish thou'd bring thy rake and make this gravel trim again."

"It'll do rightly for to-day," said Dan, looking round; and having given this as his opinion, he was about to retire into his own premises, when Mrs. Stevens tapped sharply at the window, and told him that "All the glass in the front of the house required cleaning, and must be done to-day."

"In course it must," said Dan, looking from window to window; "by rights they should be all rubbed every day."

"Get thy cloths then, Dan, and Anne will be with thee immediately: she can rub the inside," said Kitty.

"Anne may rub both inside and outside; I've no time for the likes of that, I'm sure: me with cows and horses and pigs to mind, and that hasn't got my breakfast yet."

Thus, saying, he went away to commence his duties; the first of which was to eat a very substantial breakfast of tea, bread and butter, cold meat, and the remainder of the muffins and sausages. The next to rub a curb chain as he sat by the kitchen fire. Then he gave the cow a mash of bran and water; stood for about five minutes with his hands in his pockets looking over the wall of the pig-stye, while Anne fed the pig, and then lighting his pipe he sauntered up the road to talk to Jenny Tuff, the maid-of-all-work at Mr. Grey's.

Dan Corr was a long-faced, stupid-looking young man.

His forehead was narrow, and he had a length of dull, heavy chin, which placed his mouth almost in the centre of his face. His eyes were light coloured, and rather prominent, and his features heavy. There was a general appearance of inertia, both in his countenance and in his large, loosely-built figure. He was—as his former employer had told Dr. Grant—"heart lazy," and unwilling to do anything which he could possibly avoid; but he had the clearest views as to what were the duties of all his fellow creatures, no matter in what position placed; could speak with both feeling and wisdom of the dreadful effects of carelessness, idleness, and untidiness; of which faults, everything under his care—excepting the doctor's horse, which he tended well—testified even more plainly than his words. Yet Dan had a few good points, as who has not? and under his master's close supervision would do pretty well; but the old ladies were impotent to move him out of his determined course. He might or might not attend to his work, that was as it seemed good to himself.

At present Dan was in what he himself called a "quondary;" that is, he found it impossible to make up his mind as to whether he would be better taken care of as a single or as a married man. Either Anne Dempsey, the doctor's servant, or Jenny Tuff, at Mr. Grey's, would, he was sure, be only too happy to unite their lots with his. *Ceteris paribus*, he would have preferred Anne, who was young and good-looking, but her wages were not large, and she certainly spent them all; while Jenny had high wages, was very thrifty in her personal expenditure, and was besides known to have from forty to fifty pounds in the bank; but then Jenny was far from young. Dan knew she had been twenty-five when he was only a "lump of a boy," and why should he—a fine "likely" young man—marry an old woman, even for fifty pounds? After giving the matter weighty consideration, he came to the conclusion that he would not commit himself with either Anne or Jenny; but by holding the prize—namely, himself—still hanging in uncertainty before their eyes and looking as if it might at any moment fall to the lot of either, keep alive in both the zeal for his welfare and comfort which he thought necessary.

If he married one, he could not expect to have both to attend to him: whereas, at present, Anne kept the best bits

and the most comfortable seat for him in the kitchen; and when he required variety, he had only to go up to Mr. Grey's, where Jenny, if sometimes brusque and ungenial, could generally be conciliated by some well chosen conversation on the faults and failings of the neighbourhood.

"Few her amusements; but when Dan appeared,  
She with the world's distress her spirits cheered."

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## CHAPTER VII.

ON leaving his own house, Dr. Grant turned his horse's head up the road which led from Glarisford to Holybrook, but stopped when he reached the gate of the cottage occupied by Mr. Grey and his daughter. This was a small, but pretty residence, and although the year was young the rose trees and other climbing plants, which were trained over the porch and along the trellis-work in front of the house, were beginning to show their fresh green buds, and they, and everything around the little dwelling gave evidence of the taste and care which were expended on them. The cottage was separated from the road by a low ivy-covered wall, through which a neat iron gate led into a small garden or flower knot, where now crocuses, purple, blue, and golden, were opening wide their petals to the bright March sun. Dr. Grant stopped his horse, leaned forward, looked toward the windows, but saw no person; Black Sally was not one to be trusted to stand alone, so he was about to proceed on his way when Captain Jefferson rode up.

"If you want to leave any message, Doctor," he cried, "I'll run in with it. There's Effie Walker in the window hanging up Margaret's canary, don't you see her little white hands in the sunshine—what pretty hands she has! Oh, she sees us, and is coming out." As he spoke Effie appeared at the door, looking the picture of neatness in her morning wincey, and white linen collar and cuffs; and taking her hat from the stand in the hall, she tripped lightly down the gravel walk.

"Good-morning, Captain Jefferson," she said. "Good-

morning, Dr. Grant; Aunt Margaret is so anxious to know if you have heard how Christie Ryan is to-day."

"He was much worse last night," replied the doctor. "I scarcely thought he would have lived till morning, but he has rallied again, and I do not think there is any immediate danger. I am going to see him now, and I called to tell Miss Grey that the poor creature is very anxious to see her. Could she visit him the next time she is a Holybrook?"

"Yes," replied Effie, "we are going out to Holybrook to spend the day, and bring my grandfather back, and I am sure Aunt Margaret intends to visit Christie, and also to go down to Iveagh to see poor Peg and her sick child. It will be such a nice day for a walk."

"Thank you, Miss Effie, and thank your aunt; I am sure the sight of her will do Ryan more good than all my prescriptions; good-morning." So saying, Dr. Grant drove away, Black Sally flying along the road at the top of her trotting speed.

"I hope I have your good wishes for my day's sport, Miss Walker," said Julius, while his fine horse reared and curvetted, impatient at being left behind.

"Oh! surely," replied Effie, looking up with her pleasant smile, "I hope the brush may be yours."

"If so may I bring it to you?"

"Oh! please no, Captain Jefferson, I am not fond of such trophies."

"You do not like wild sports yet," said Julius, smiling.

"When is your sister coming? Do you think she will venture with me to the Dead Man's Cave again?"

"Ellen is too daring still," replied Effie, "so you must be careful not to lead her into any danger. We expect her to come very soon now, you know she is to be at Aunt Fanny's wedding."

"Yes, we shall all be delighted to see her, and I promise you I shall not lead her over any break-neck precipices as I did long ago when we were young. Your sister and I were well matched. What an adventurous little pair we were. I would not do now what we did then for any consideration. Although I certainly should like to see the Dead Man's Cave again. You have no idea how beautiful it was, with its

polished dome and its crystal basin. They say there are a few days in the year so calm that it is safe for a boat to venture into it. What say you to an expedition to it some such fine day?"

Effie smiled, but shook her head, then as the fine hunter caracoled more loftily than before, she exclaimed, "Oh! Captain Jefferson, your horse is frightening me. How he capers! You must not keep him standing any longer. Good-morning, and may all success attend your sport."

"Good-morning," said the Captain, "I only wish I could prevail on you to ride out to see the meet. I have such a gentle horse which I could bring in for you any day. This weather is so charming for riding. Do allow me."

Effie held up her little hands deprecatingly. "You remember what I was long ago, and I am no better since; I shall be a coward as long as I live. Don't let yourself be late, Captain Jefferson—good-bye."

Julius would have been very willing to continue the *tête-à-tête*, but there was no further excuse for remaining, so bidding his companion good-bye, he gave the reins to his impatient steed, and was soon out of sight.

Effie lingered in the sunny garden to pick a few of the crocuses and anemones, and some of the bright little hepaticas, blue and crimson, which were blowing out, as is their wont, almost independent of the green leaves which were to follow in the later spring. She had gathered a pretty bunch, and was arranging them in her hand, when she heard the heavy steps of Mr. Maunders' horse as it came plodding up the road, bearing its ponderous master behind it on a stout-built outside car.

"Good morning, Miss," he said, stopping at the gate, "it seems to me all the bright things is coming out in the sunshine to-day."

"Your most brilliant compliments among the rest, Mr. Maunders," said Effie, smiling; "are you going out to Holybrook?"

"Yes, Miss, I come in for the post myself to-day; can I do anything for you in that direction?"

"No, thank you, Aunt Margaret and I are to spend the day at Uncle Wilfred's; I think it is time for us to be getting ready, as we have a long walk before us."

"You're not surely going to walk, Miss," said the large man, who finding that way of locomotion very trying to himself, always pitied those who made use of it. "You'll be drowned in the mud, Miss, don't do it. If you'll just favour the other side of my car, I'll be proud and happy as can be."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Maunders," said Effie, "we shall be glad to go with you, for we have so much walking to get through to-day, I think we should be tired before night. I shall run in to tell Aunt Margaret, and to send some one to hold your horse, for you must not stand here waiting for us."

"Oh! as to that Miss Effie, as you're so kind I'll walk in and have a word with your Jenny, while you and Miss Margaret are puttin' on yourselves. But there's no sort of occasion for you to send anyone to hold Jane, it's her nature to stand still, and she's only out of nature when she's goin' on."

Margaret and Effie were soon equipped in their warm winter muffling, and seated on one side of Mr. Maunders' car, with a comfortable rug wrapped well around their knees, and so prepared to enjoy the sunshiny morning, keen and cold though it was.

"Look alive Jane," growled Mr. Maunders, with a chuck of the reins, and two or three sharp "clicking" sounds proceeding from the corner of his mouth, which were intended for the further encouragement of the stout quadruped, who, from respect to the deceased partner of all his joys and sorrows, he had named Jane; "look alive old girl—click! click!"

So admonished, Jane began to move gradually, and after a time broke into a heavy lumbering trot, her great feet splashing the gutter to right and left as she proceeded along the muddy road.

"You see young ladies," said Mr. Maunders, "you'd ha' been mud to the ancles if you'd walked out to the Mills such a day as this. Jane splashes a trifle to be sure, but then the feet's what's to be considered."

"Much more than the head," said Effie, starting as a piece of thick mud flew past, and all but lighted on the pink flower in Margaret's bonnet. "Don't you think the footpath looks nice and clean now, Mr. Maunders?—perhaps we had better walk up this hill, Jane may not like such a load."

"Oh, not at all, Miss, when once she starts she does not mind how many's on the car; the weight keeps it steady to the road you see. Where are you for, Miss, the Mill or the Abbey?"

"Whichever suits you best, Mr. Maunders," replied Margaret; "we intend going to both places, so it makes no difference to us. The Mill comes first, so if you will kindly leave us there we can walk the rest of the way."

"Whatever's pleasing to you is pleasing to me, Miss Margaret," said Richard Maunders, and on they trotted.

"Splash! splash! across the land they go," said Effie, laughing as she tried to shelter herself from the muddy shower which "Jane" tossed high into the air. "Do dear Aunt Margaret let us get down as soon as we can, or our garments will be beyond brushing."

"I think we must only be patient," replied Margaret, "fortunately our rug shawls will not be much the worse. I would hold up an umbrella, but that I fear Mr. Maunders' feelings might be hurt. Besides it would be a pity to hide any part of the view. How beautiful the mountains appear this morning in the bright sunshine. Looking only at them one could almost imagine it was Midsummer, the tints along their sides are so soft and clear."

The lands of Holybrook, towards which Mr. Maunders' car was now journeying, lay at the feet and along the sides of Lugdarrig and Knockduff, two of the loftiest of the chain of hills which rose to the north of Glarisford; each summit of the range had its particular designation, but they were known *en masse* as the Glarisford Mountains. None of them reached a very great elevation, the highest not more than two thousand five hundred feet; but they were steep, rugged, and picturesque in their outlines, and added greatly to the beauty of the town and its neighbourhood, although perhaps in their immediate vicinity, among their granite rocks, deep ravines, and boggy table lands, there was too much of barren wildness to allow of the scenery being termed beautiful. Yet these hills had a peculiar charm to those who lived near them, climbed their steep precipices, or rested on their sunny slopes, where the yellow furze blossomed nearly all the year, and the heather, the broom, the bracken, and the clinging ivy grew around the



great grey boulders, which, scattered far and near, looked as if in the elder times some mighty giants had been warring there, and had left these missives strewn upon the ground to tell of their combat. Deep lakes lay among the higher gorges, still and dark, and like all such lone tarns, said to be fathomless; and lower down the mountain were found sweet glens, whose sides were clothed with the greenest and softest turf, and where grew many a graceful fern, and every mountain flower, from the stately foxglove, with its pyramid of purple bells, to the tiny eyebright, ever turning its blossoms upward. Through these glens murmured little streams as clear as crystal, leaping from stone to stone in sparkling cascades, or eddying round the rocks which intercepted their course, whilst fringes of ferns, brambles, and waving grass, hung in rich festoons over the dancing water.

The Mills, the property of Wilfréd Grey, lay quite in the valley through which flowed the river—the Holy Brook—from which the district took its name.

The Abbey was more toward the mountains, but immediately around both the country was rich and fertile; although beyond, it soon became wild, rocky, and barren, and trees there were none, excepting here and there a few patches of young birch and pine. The Abbey grounds themselves could boast of noble oaks and elms, planted long before the memory of any person now living. And near the old ruins and in the adjoining fields grew great Italian pines, with their tawny trunks and canopies of dark green foliage, interspersed now with decaying and gnarled branches, for some of the trees were dying, one or two were dead; and no wonder, for they were said to be of an almost fabulous age, and might have been growing there since the earlier centuries of the Christian era, when tradition tells that Holybrook Abbey was one of the seats of learning, whence Ireland sent forth her wise men and her saints to evangelise, not only the sister isles, but the neighbouring continent also.

"Here we are now, almost at Holybrook; see, there is Wilfred standing at the gate."

"Will you be pleased to get off at the gate, Miss," asked Mr. Maunders, "or will I drive you up to the house?"

"No, no, Mr. Maunders, we shall not take you out of your

way ; please stop at the gate. You see my brother is there, and we can walk up with him."

As Wilfred Grey stood now at his own handsome entrance-gates, he looked, what he was—a thriving, contented man, not above minding his business. He was making by its means a comfortable independence for himself and his family, and yet it never kept him too closely confined, nor prevented him from enjoying other country recreations.

"You are welcome, Mag ; and you too, Effie, my little sunbeam," he said, as the car stopped at the avenue gates, and he helped his sister and niece to alight. "So Maunders has induced you to try his conveyance, although you won't have one of your own. My father and Margaret are resolute on this point ; they will not keep a horse."

"What should we do with a horse and man ?" said Margaret, with a deprecating smile ; for Wilfred, who was always anxious that his father and sister should indulge in more luxuries than they were themselves inclined for, wished much that they should keep a conveyance of their own.

"True for you, Miss," joined in Mr. Maunders, in his usual deep guttural tones of sympathy. "True for you, Miss. Most part of horses get into all sorts of scrapes ; and as for men, they do nothin' in the world but fomentin' nonsense among the maid-servants."

"Oh, Aunt Mag !" cried a shrill but delighted little voice, as a fine curly-headed boy of seven years old bounded down the avenue, having escaped from the side of a tall clerical gentlemen with whom he had been walking, "are you coming to spend the day ? and is Effie ?"

"Yes, Arthur, darling, we are come to spend the day with you, and to ask grandpapa to come home with us, for we have been very lonely without him."

"Grandpapa can't go till he finishes the town he is making for Theodore and me," said the boy, with decision.

"Is grandpapa making you a town, dear ?"

"Oh yes, a great and splendid town, with streets, and a bridge, and a market-house, and church, and everything. Theodore stayed to see him finishing the church spire, and I just ran down to ask papa about the paint, and I would have got it long ago, only I met nasty Uncle Tatlow"

"Hush ! hush ! Arthur," whispered Margaret ; " you should not call Mr. Tatlow nasty, and besides he is not your uncle yet."

"I hope he soon will be," rejoined the child, " for when he is my uncle, Aunt Fanny 'll be away."

"Oh, Arthur, both Aunt Fanny and he have been very kind to you."

"Well, I met him at any rate, whatever he is, and he made me walk beside him all down the avenue, and I hated it, for he wanted to know if I'd bought a hymn-book with the shilling he gave me last week ; but I didn't, for I sent to town by the post boy for four tin soldiers to mount guard on the bridge."

"And where are mamma and Aunt Fanny ?"

"Oh, they're at home in the house, ever so busy, at least Aunt Fanny is."

"We left all deeply engaged in household duties," said Mr. Tatlow, the gentleman from whom little Arthur had escaped, and who had now joined the rest of the party, and was with them returning to the house. "Ah, what will Mrs. Grey do without her sister," he continued, in a penitent voice.

"Badly enough, Tatlow," said Wilfred ; " but I suppose, as you are determined on stealing her away, it can't be helped."

"And this poor boy," said the clergyman, laying his hand benignantly on the child's head. "What will you do, my little man, when your dear Aunt Fanny leaves you ?"

"Oh !" cried the child, "won't it be fine, Theodore and I'll be awful glad ; we'll be allowed to have rabbits and guinea pigs, and everything then."

In the morning-room Margaret and Effie found Mrs. Grey with her little bright-eyed baby, who had not yet completed her first year. Julia, whom we formerly knew as a pretty slender girl, was now a large, comely woman, fresh and fair, and with her baby in her arms she looked the picture of a happy young matron.

Fanny Grey, in whose clear brunette complexion, dark hair, and slight active figure even ten years had made little or no alteration, hastened down stairs to welcome her sister and niece

There was much to be said about wedding dresses and wedding arrangements, for in a few weeks Fanny was to be married to the ever-constant Mr. Tatlow.

When silks, satins, laces, shawls, and all the innumerable *et ceteras* of the trousseau had been fully talked over and inspected, Margaret went down to the study where her father, when at Holybrook, usually spent his mornings. He was grown an old man, and from severe rheumatism had become even more feeble than is usual at his advanced years, for he had passed the three score and ten. He much enjoyed the company of his grandchildren, and was now busily employed making for them a wooden toy town. Margaret found him surrounded by delighted and excited admirers—Arthur, Theodore, and little Mary—all being unwilling to leave the old man until a church spire, now in course of construction, was completed. The grandfather looked as happy as the children, while he worked at the toy and listened to their prattle.

"Well, father, said Margaret, kissing him, "Arthur tells me he will not allow you to come home until you have finished the town; but I cannot agree to that, for we are too lonely without you."

"But we'll be lonelier," cried the boys in one breath; whilst little Mary, clasping her tiny hands round the old man's arm, said, "No, no, g'andp'a mustn't go."

"You see, Margaret, I am a prisoner," he said; "nevertheless, I think I can make my escape with you this evening. How are all at home?"

"All quite well; and Ellen is to be with us on Monday. I had a note from Marion this morning, to say that she would be at Glarisford by the evening train."

"Nell will be welcome as the flowers in May," said Mr. Grey; "but I understood she was not coming till a day or two before the wedding."

"Nor was she, but her mother thinks it better for her to have her dresses made in Glarisford; so she will have shopping and other things to attend to before the wedding."

"What! is not all the finery provided yet!" exclaimed Mr. Grey; "I thought I had seen enough silk and satin within the last week to furnish three or four weddings."

"Yes, but our pretty bridesmaidens have not bought their dresses yet."

"And what are they to wear, pray?"

Oh! clouds of white tarleton and cherry-coloured ribbons."

"I am not much the wiser, but I have no doubt it is all as it should be."

"Lunch is ready in the morning-room," said Mrs. Grey, entering the study. "Little ones, you should be all out of doors this fine day, and besides, you are keeping dear grand-papa quite too long at work."

"Effie and I have a long walk before us," said Margaret; "it is full time for us to go."

"And Wilfred promised to take me out at one o'clock. I can help him, I hope, with my advice about the new drains," said Mr. Grey.

"All good and sufficient reasons why you should have your lunch first. Fanny has made some coffee in the glass globes, which, if Mr. Tatlow is to be believed, has never before been equalled, and I met the mutton chops, etc., in the hall; so all is ready for you. Run away to your nurse, children dears; she will give you your dinner; and then you are all to go out while the sun shines."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

WELL warmed and refreshed by Mrs. Grey's kind care, Margaret and Effie set out, about one o'clock, on their way to visit poor Christie Ryan. When they had passed through the plantations and cultivated ground which surrounded Wilfred Grey's house, they soon entered on a much wilder country, the path leading away through granite rocks and furze-covered banks; but it was dry and clean, as pathways in a granite country generally are, and Effie greatly rejoiced that she was on her feet again, instead of being borne along by Jane, and splashed from head to foot with mud. When they had walked about a mile, they entered, and began to ascend a steep rocky lane which looked more like the bed of a mountain torrent than a way for foot passengers, much less for horses or wheeled conveyances; yet, in the softer parts of the road there were wheel tracks plainly visible, for Dr. Grant and his sure footed Black Sally had often to pass along it. At some distance up the hill the lane widened into a kind of yard or

open space before a long, low cabin, at the door of which a large untidy woman was washing potatoes, whilst the muddy water which she poured from the tub found a channel for itself across the rocky space, falling at last into a green slushy pool on the opposite side. On seeing the two ladies, the woman raised herself from her stooping position, wiped the back of her red hand across her face, and stared at them, without making any further recognition than a low grunt or growl, which may have been intended for a greeting, although certainly not a very warm one.

"Well, Nance," said Margaret, "this is a fine morning. How is your husband to-day?"

"Oh, aye," replied Nance Ryan, "it's a fine enough day for them that can get out to sport themselves wherever they like, an' hasn't the eyes scalded out of their head wid sitting up all night. He's as bad as can be. Ye can go in an' see him, if ye choose."

So saying, and with the slightest possible movement to the one side, just sufficient to allow Margaret and Effie to pass through the doorway, the woman resumed her labours at the potatoe tub. The room which they entered was dirty, smoky, and very dark, the windows, small in themselves, being choked up, one with an old hat, the other with a bundle of nondescript rags, so that there was scarcely light sufficient to show the haggard emaciated face of the sick man, who lay on the low settle bed beside the smouldering turf fire. This was Christie Ryan, Mr. Grey's old gardener. "Your sarvant, ladies," he said, in a low husky voice. "Oh, Miss Margot, I've prayed the Lord I might see you to-day. I'm so low and sunk, I think I must be goin' at last. Glory be to God for it! I think I won't hould more'n a week longer. The doctor, he says, I might hould on to summer; but I hope not, Miss, I hope not."

"We must all wait our time, Christie," said Margaret, sitting down beside the low bed, while Effie took a more distant seat. "I hope you are not suffering quite so much as you were."

"No, Miss, I'm easier now the doctor brought me a draught—that has quietened the pain for a bit. But, the Lord forgive me, Miss, I'm just wearying to be gone. Nance is

tired of me ; an' its no wonder. I'm lyin' off an' on near a year now, and not able to make any debate, no not these two years. An' though Mr. Wilfred an' Miss Julia's as good as can be, an' gives us more nor any one knows, an' the old mistress up at the Abbey's quare an' kind, still Nance, you see," and he lowered his voice, "she's no one to make things go far ; she squatters 'em all away as soon as she gets 'em. And as for Peter and poor Peg, God help us all !" And the sick man sighed painfully. "Miss Effie," he continued, turning slowly round, "do you remember my fine boys afore they went to the Crimea—Pat an' Phil ?"

"Yes, I remember them very well ; they worked in the Mill, did they not ? and Peter was with you in the garden."

"Aye, Peter worked with me, an' he's with me still, heaven help me ! Oh, but Pat and Phil were the fine boys when they went out with Master Julius. They sarved, an' got their wounds under him, an' I'm tould he was good to them, an' had 'em taken to the hospital, and everything. So I tell Peter, when he says the Captain's hard, he wasn't hard to them. Sure he couldn't keep 'em alive."

"I believe he did everything in his power for your poor sons," said Margaret ; "where is Peter working now ?"

"Peter never does a stroke of work now, Miss," replied the sick man, "not since the Captain shot that young hound of his. He worked at the Abbey up to that ; the hound was mischievous, no doubt ; but it scalds a man's heart to see his dog killed afore his eyes. Oh, Miss, if Master Theodore had been left over us, 'twas what we was all looking forward to, for he had the heart, and he was the gentleman ; but the Captain he thinks of nothin' but sportin' and ridin', and Mister Julian's all for the book learnin' ; so you see the poor tenants don't be looked afther too well."

"But does not Mr. Maunders manage all ? and is he not kind to the poor ?" asked Margaret.

"Aye, I suppose so, Miss, but he can't be everywhere ; and you see he must just do what he's tould, and them that tells him don't think much about it one way or other. They say the poor people are better off over toward Ballydock side ; his riverence, Father Drumgoole's a great friend of Master Julians, an' he speaks for 'em."

"Well," cried Nance, as she entered the house wiping her hands, and then her face in her thick sacken apron, "what are ye up to now, Christie? talkin' till there won't be a breath left in yer ould body, so that I can't get a wink of sleep to-night wid yer coughin'. Shut up, now." Then, turning to Margaret, she eyed her inquiringly, as if to ask what she had to give as payment for this intrusion.

Margaret rose, and laying on the table some jelly and other trifles which she had brought for the sick man, bid him good-bye.

"Good-bye, Miss Margot, and God be with you," said Christie, raising his head. "Don't be scared of coming again, Miss. I haven't said all I wanted to you, and maybe never will; but it does me good only to look at you, and to think of Master Theodore—the heavens be his bed! But he's better there nor here. Don't you keep frettin' for him always; and, Miss Margot, if there's a Christian gentleman left in the world it's Dr. Grant, and he desarves to be happy."

A look of pain crossed Margaret's face.

"Aye, the doctor's a good man," said Nance, with decision. "He'll go yon, no fear, where the Captain'll never get." Having delivered herself of this cheering prospect for the bright-eyed young Captain, Nance Ryan retired into the inner room without waiting to see the ladies depart.

"Miss," said Christie, as they were going, "Miss Margot, when you see Master Julian next, will you speak to him to give Peter an' his wife a house in Ballynock. When I'm dead and gone they won't want to stay in Iveagh."

"Never you mind doin' anythin' of the sort," called Nance, from her chamber; "Peter's well enough in Iveagh, and the Captain can't take his house from him; it's his and Peg's by the law of the land."

Climbing over a fence of loose stones, Margaret and Effie pursued their way across three or four fields, until they came to a rough hill-side, where the furze, now bursting into full bloom, grew large and luxuriant, their thick bushes of sharp spines growing so closely together as to forbid a passage—to feminine garments, at least.

"Which way are we to take now, Aunt Margaret?" asked Effie: "We cannot, surely, go through the furze bushes; but



do let us sit down here in the sunshine, and smell the blossoms, they are so sweet, and will refresh us before we undertake any more of the Ryan family. Nance is an awful woman. What eyes she has!"

"She is far from agreeable," said Margaret, taking a seat on a stone near her niece. "Poor Christie has much to suffer besides bodily pain. She treats him as if he were a naughty child. How pleasant it is here in the sunshine. Is that a lark, I hear?"

"Yes," said Effie, "and there is another rising off the ground. Spring is surely come now."

Iveagh, through which townland Miss Grey and her niece were now walking, was bleak and lonely as mountain-side could be; not a tree was visible in any direction, and the fields were fenced only by walls of loose unbuilt stones, and yet there was much that was picturesque in this wilderness. The small, fine grass was green as emerald, and too short to wet the foot, even when the dew was heavy on it, and the granite rocks in some places, appearing only as flags along the pathway, in others, rising to a height of ten or twenty feet, and adorned in all their crevices by tiny plants of heather, broom, and penny-leaf, or long fringes of fern and couch grass, possessed considerable beauty. Down the hill-side, a rapid stream came leaping and foaming over its rocky channel, swollen, but not muddied by the last night's rain, for the granite country through which it flowed, imparted to it only a milky and slightly opaque appearance even in the greatest freshets.

"Nance Ryan makes my flesh creep," said Effie, with a little shudder, "and I think her son Peter is like her."

"Yes, Peter is like his mother; the other poor boys who died at Scutari resembled Christie, they were honest and open-hearted."

"Talk of a saint, and he'll draw near," whispered Effie; "there is Peter coming through the fox-cover." At the same moment a thick-set man, with scrubby red hair, loose tattered garments, and a countenance which bore an expression of scowling defiance, emerged from among the furze into the open field.

"This is a fine day, Peter," said Margaret, addressing him; "Do you think I shall find Peg at home if I go down to the cottage?"

"Aye. What w'd she be doin' out?" replied the man, with much the same tone and mode of expression as his mother had before used. "She'll keep in as long as she has a roof to cover her, I suppose."

"What a dreadful family!" said Effie, looking after the man, as, with his hat slouched over his face, and his hands in his pockets, he took his way down the hill, followed by two or three surly, ill-looking dogs. "Must you go to see Peg to-day, Aunt Margaret? We shall be certain to meet Peter if we do, and he really frightens me."

"Poor little Peg will not frighten you, Effie; and see, Peter is taking the opposite direction. So I think we had better go at once; Julia told us to be back in good time." So saying, she rose, and followed by Effie, descended the steep path which skirted Iveagh fox-cover; at one time a favourite resort of those animals beloved of sportsmen, but now, from various causes, and to the great chagrin of its present owner, almost deserted by them.

At the end of the gorse-covered bank there was a narrow paved road, across which the little stream flowed broad and rippling, then, gathering itself into a narrower compass, leaped brawling down among green knolls and granite boulders, till its course was turned by a steep bank, the base of Holybrook Hill—a shoulder of Knockduff mountain. Pursuing its course a little further it joined the larger stream, the Holy Brook, which flowed round the Abbey grounds, turned Wilfred Grey's mill-wheel, and after a circuitous course of many miles, united itself with the broad river on which the town of Glarisford was built.

With some difficulty Margaret and Effie picked their steps across the unsteady stones by which foot-passengers were expected to gain the other side of the bridgeless stream, and in a few minutes found themselves at the door of Peter Ryan's dwelling.

Ruskin says that "It is almost impossible to make a cottage built in a granite country, look absolutely miserable." I am afraid that of Peter Ryan must form an exception to the rule; true, the ground about it was not muddy, and the water which lay among the stones and around the old forge—unused since the death of Peg's father, who had been an honest smith, and worked

hard at his trade—was clear and not turbid ; but the cottage was miserable as human abode could be. The thatch was brown, mouldering, and quite insufficient to keep out the heavy rains of winter, as a pool or two on the floor testified. The door—if one might judge from the smoke which issued from it—served also for a chimney ; nor were there any other apertures in the walls, for if there had at any time been windows in the cabin, they had long since been stopped up with untransparent substances, as turf, rags, &c., and did not now admit a gleam of light.

In this residence, Peter, the youngest son of the Ryan family, had hung up his hat, it being his wife's inalienable freehold property, bequeathed to her by her father, who had obtained legal possession of it by paying no rent for twenty-one years, the former Mr. Jefferson not having had the heart to ask payment for such a miserable tenement.

Margaret and Effie entered the cabin, but it was some moments before, in the murky twilight within, they could discern the form of a young woman, who, leaning over a wooden cradle, was crooning a soft low song to a poor puny child of about two years old. It lay there, looking in its haggard and sickly infancy, almost as old as its dying grandfather, whom they had before visited.

The young woman raised her face as they entered—a pale sweet face, with large thoughtful eyes, and features, the outlines of which were both delicate and refined ; a face which, had Providence cast her lot where wealth, luxury, and refinement could have nurtured, and tended her from her youth, might have been pre-eminently beautiful, and received the admiration due to such loveliness. But poverty, hunger, and want had watched over Peg's cradle, accompanied her girlhood, and now, when she had reached woman's estate, to these sad attendants were added the harsh treatment of a brutal husband, and the bleeding of a mother's heart over the sickly child whose sufferings she had no means of alleviating.

"Is Patsy any better, Peg?" asked Margaret, softly, as she stooped over the cradle.

"Ah ! no, Miss, never a bit," replied the mother, still holding the small hot hand in her own, and looking tenderly at the sick child ; "the doctor's bottle does him no good now,

and he won't take the broth and things the mistress sends down from the Abbey. She's tarrible good, and she'd come see him herself if she could, for she's very wise about childer; but you see she's up in years now, Miss, and she couldn't walk so far, nor the carriage couldn't come this way neither. But signs on it! I'm afeard nothing can do Patsy no good now, he's just dwindlin' off, day by day, and—glory be to God!—may-be it's the best thing for him; but, oh! my poor heart's sore to lose him. And Peter—he doesn't care. He doesn't seem to care for any of us now. Oh! Miss Margot!" and the poor young woman, resting her head on the side of the cradle, wept low and bitterly, whilst Margaret tried to soothe her with kind words and hopes for better times to come. Yet, where was the hope, or what brighter future could there be in store for poor Peg on this side the grave? Her husband was cruel, drunken, and as Mr. Maunders had said, there was worse behind, for he was suspected of belonging to a gang of thieves who infested the mountains, and who, during the autumn of the previous year, had broken into Wilfred Grey's office, and carried away some loose money and other things.

Nothing was, however proved against him, although few had any doubt as to his evil courses. He did not work, and he had no honest means of obtaining money, yet he had always plenty to spend on himself in eating and drinking at the public-houses, whilst he generally left his wife and child to the charity of their neighbours.

"Miss," said Peg, raising her tearful eyes to Margaret's face, "couldn't you spake for us to the Captain. Sure, you're like his own sister, and he'll hearken to what you say. If he'd only tell Mr. Maunders to speak fair to Peter, an' not rile him up about the dogs, I'm sartain sure he'd send 'em all away, an' sure the foxes wouldn't mind the likes of us livin' here. Or, Miss"—and the poor, sorrow-stricken face lighted up with a sudden gleam of hope—"If Master Julian would let Peter have a house in Ballynock, under his riverence's eye, I think he'd take to better courses—I really think he would, Miss. Whisht! here he comes," she continued, as a heavy step approached the door, and two lean hounds ran in, sniffing round the wretched cabin to see if by chance there were any eatables left in pot or saucepan.

Margaret gave Peg the bundle of small garments which she had brought—clothing for another little one, which was soon to add to the poor woman's solicitude, whether for weal or woe. Then Effie and she left the cabin as Peter Ryan entered. With a surly growl, he passed them, and seated himself at the fire.

The path which they now pursued—the nearest way from Iveagh to the Mills—led down beside the brawling stream, and over the top of Holybrook Hill. The breeze came fresh and pleasantly, not chill nor harsh, as March winds generally are, but bearing in its breath sweet promises of returning spring. On the grassy hill-side the furze bushes were all spangled with their golden blossoms, and the small birds chattered in the sunshine, as they flew from rock to rock, whilst high at "Heaven's gate," the larks were singing their most jubilant songs.

"Poor Peg!" said Effie, softly and sadly.

"Poor creature!" repeated Margaret, "it makes one's heart bleed to see her, and to feel so powerless to help her."

"Does she at all remind you of Ellen?"

"Yes," replied Margaret, "I think their beauty is of the same character. But one can scarcely imagine Peg's face, beautiful as it undoubtedly is, lighted up with Ellen's joyous expression, far less think of dear Nell with poor Peg's look of silent endurance."

On turning the shoulder of Holybrook Hill, the Abbey lands were seen lying in the valley below, making, with their fine old trees, their ivy-covered ruins, comfortable dwelling-house, and trim gardens, a pretty picture in the hazy afternoon sunshine. Rooks, happy in the brightness of returning spring, were sitting on the topmost boughs of the old trees, or wheeling aloft in airy circles, cawing loudly concerning the nests which they had built or were about building; whilst jackdaws, more alert and lively than their larger brethren, attended to similar domestic matters amongst the shining ivy which covered the old ruins; and on the smooth reach of the river which lay below the sloping gardens, four swans were floating, with graceful and languid dignity.

"How beautiful the Abbey grounds look;" said Effie, "Shall we have time to call there?"

"Perhaps we may go in for a minute or two; Mrs. Jefferson would not like us to pass her by. Ah! there is

Julian coming up the hill. I am so glad to see you," continued Margaret, as the young man hastened to meet them. "I was afraid even this day would not tempt you out."

"The sunshine was irresistible," said Julian Jefferson, as he greeted Margaret and Effie, "I felt that I must go out, and I hope that the mountain breezes may blow away some of the cobwebs from my brains."

"But do not turn back with us," said Margaret, "we should be sorry to interfere with such a praiseworthy object."

"I may as well walk in one direction as the other, and I assure you Margaret a walk with you will do more for me than even the mountain breezes."

"How pale you look, Julian! Have you been ill?"

"No, I am quite well; but I daresay I may look seedy, for I did not go to bed till five o'clock this morning."

"Till five! you were not at the Castle, were you?"

"No; but yesterday I got on the trail of an old legend connected with this Abbey, the incidents of which occurred among our mountains. I have not met with anything for a long time which interested me so much. I spent all the night seeking amongst some old papers of my father's for further information on the subject, and I have been wonderfully successful. Perhaps," he continued turning to Miss Grey with a bright smile, "perhaps, Margaret, I may try to weave the incidents together; a very little colouring would, I think, make of them a romance of no small interest. Oh! if I could only immortalise our dear old Abbey and its rugged surroundings."

Margaret Grey loved Julian as much as if he had been her own brother. Since Theodore Jefferson's death, he had seemed to her as her peculiar charge, and the solicitude which she felt for his welfare, and her anxiety to help, comfort, and encourage him, partook, perhaps, more of the quality of a mother's than a sister's affection. She knew that his powers of mind were considerable, and she longed that they might be guided into safe and worthy channels.

Although only in his twenty-fifth year, he had already been successful in the line of authorship which he had chosen; but his writings were of a desultory nature, seeming, although always filled with pure and noble sentiments, rather the

efflorescence of an untutored imagination, than the result of deep thought or study. She was always glad of his success ; delighted when his efforts were approved and commended ; yet in her inmost heart she feared that laurels too lightly won might rather injure than adorn ; and she dreaded lest, in still further endeavouring to gain and to deserve this fame, he might over-strain faculties which required rather the bracing and strengthening of quiet study, research, and earnest thought, and, above all, intercourse with sounder and more advanced intellects than his own.

She wished much that he could travel, see something more of the world and of mankind, and that his powers, both of mind and body, might be matured and strengthened before he gave himself up altogether to the pursuit of literature. She heard of sleepless nights, restless thoughts, throbbing brows, and fits of languor—for Julian told her all his troubles—and she longed that he had some other object in life, some source of happiness more real and tangible, than he could find in his own imaginations, however good or poetical they might be. And better, perhaps, still than travel or general society would be the constant sympathy and support which a loving and faithful wife might be to him. Margaret was not a match-maker, but it seemed to her that her dear little Effie possessed all the qualities which Julian most needed in such a companion. She was gentle, good, sweet-tempered, steady as a rock, and yet with a mind well qualified to understand and to sympathise with all his favourite pursuits and occupations. Nothing in the world, she believed, could now give her greater pleasure than to see these two united.

Poor Margaret ! her own vision of earthly happiness had early passed away. But that grief, severe and terrible as it had been, was not followed, except at first, by actual gloom or anything like despair ; the brightness of life had certainly faded, but time's softening hand had done much, and resignation had come at last, bringing with it contentment in her quiet lot, and a peace and tranquility, for which, perhaps, the fitful gladness of early life would be but a poor exchange.

It has been said that a great sorrow must either raise us toward heaven or strike us down to earth ; purify and refine the heart, or make it hard and cold.

If we recognise the hand which chastens us as that of an all-wise, all-merciful Father; who would not willingly afflict, and cling trustfully and hopefully to that hand, it will raise us even from amid the darkest and most overwhelming waves of grief and calamity, to a clearer, purer air; through the medium of which we may be permitted in part to see why, and for what wise purpose, our most cherished hopes had been frustrated, our greatest joys taken from us, and trusting still, be enabled to wait in patience for the time when our weak faith shall be changed to perfect sight; when the mysteries of this strange, and seemingly tangled existence, shall be unravelled before our wondering eyes, and we shall see that all which in it appeared dark and inexplicable, was only so because our mortal faculties had not power to discern its meaning, nor our minds capacity to measure the height and depth of the boundless love and wisdom which governs all things.

As the party descended the hill, Miss Grey told Julian of her visit to Peg Ryan, and of the poor woman's wish to obtain a house in Ballynock, a little village on his portion of the estate. The young man did not know much about his property, either houses or lands, had no idea whether there were an uninhabited dwelling in Ballynock, but said he would inquire, and that if there were Peter and his family might go to it at once.

"Ah Julian," said Margaret smiling; "I wish you could spare more time to these things. I should like to hear of a little less writing, and a little more oversight of your tenants. It would do you so much good to walk over these hills every day, and to see what Mr. Maunders is doing."

"Surely no one more enjoys a walk among the mountains than I. As to Mr. Maunders——," and the young man shrugged his shoulders.

"But the poor people, Julian—you know so little about them."

"Well; as soon as I have finished what I am at present engaged at I really must turn over a new leaf, and begin to study these houses and lands of mine a little more, but they are no pleasure to me Margaret: I wish some one else had them."

Miss Grey shook her head. "That is an old story," she said, "but believe me, you would benefit yourself as much as your property, if you would but take my advice. You cannot



remain so closely at your studies without injuring your health, and with it your mental powers. Surely, dear Julian, you should consider this."

"I will consider it," he replied; "I will consider everything you say, and walk over to Ballynock to-morrow to see what can be done for the Ryans; Mr. Drumgoole can advise me better, and influence them more than anyone I know. Ah! there is the man himself standing on the door-steps with my mother," he continued as they came in front of the Abbey, and on the wide stone steps which led up to the entrance door were seen standing a stout, elderly lady, and a rosy-cheeked middle-aged man, dressed in the garb of a Roman Catholic priest.

The lady was Mrs. Jefferson, the widow of the former proprietor of Holybrook, and stepmother to the two young men who were now joint possessors of the estate. She was, as Peg Ryan had said, "well up in years," but plump and well favoured; her face large and kindly, resembling much that of her brother, Samuel Ward, both in features and complexion. She was dressed now in mourning, which gave to her rather florid style of person a more ladylike appearance than the very showy attire to which she had been addicted during her husband's lifetime.

She had never worn gay attire from vanity or love of dress, but simply because she thought it would please Mr. Jefferson, that she should look as fashionable as possible; but having been brought up as a very "plain friend," she did not know how to carry out her wishes, except by leaving all to the taste of a Glarisford milliner, who arrayed the poor lady in a manner so exceedingly showy as to have been almost sufficient to create some prejudice against the wearer, but for the simple kindly expression of her countenance, and the unobtrusive mildness of her whole demeanour.

Her face was one which invited both young and old to go to her for sympathy, and in trouble, sickness, or sorrow, none could be more truly helpful.

In bodily sickness, Mrs. Jefferson was the best and kindest of nurses, and the poor came to her from far and near for salves, cough mixtures, liniments, medicines of every description. She was old now, and not able for visiting amongst them, or for much active exertion; but she gave with a liberal

hand, and her ready sympathy and charity flowed for all. In mental distress and affliction she did also everything that was in her power, as Julian Jefferson often gratefully acknowledged in hours of languor and depression—not that she was one who could understand any metaphysical or fanciful distress—but perhaps this did not make her less qualified to soothe and comfort; to give hopeful assurance of things not being “half so bad as they appeared,” and “that all would turn out well in the end,” &c. Then looking to the welfare of the body, and building up and comforting the soul’s tabernacle, as none knew better how to do, she would greatly mollify and relieve its troubled inhabitant.

Julius was not in much need of sympathy for troubles of any description, either pertaining to body or mind, although of course he liked both to be at ease, and he fully appreciated the comforts of his home, and the kind good woman who made it what it was.

Such was Kitty Grant’s cousin Charlotte, who rather late in life had become the second wife of Arthur Jefferson. After the death of the first Mrs. Jefferson, she had taken the charge of his four motherless children, and tended them with such loving care, that the widower, although he could not offer to her the love which he had laid in his Julia’s grave, feeling toward her esteem, regard, and gratitude, asked her after some years to become his wife. She had not consented without much opposition from her relatives, all of whom belonged to the Society of Friends; for this marriage, excellent as it was in point of rank and station, was looked on by them as a wandering from the fold.

The lady, however, could not see it in this light, particularly as her brother Samuel did not disapprove of the step. So the marriage was solemnised at a small church near Dublin, and the modest wedding dinner was given at her brother’s house.

The sister of course lost her membership amongst Quakers, and the brother did not escape serious censure for aiding and abetting the marriage.

The Reverend Terence Drumgoole, Roman Catholic priest of Iveagh and Ballynock, who now stood beside Mrs. Jefferson on the Abbey steps, was a little, round, middle-aged man,

with rosy cheeks, and small, twinkling grey eyes. He considered himself literary, and was a virtuoso in his own small way, his house being filled with such paintings and curiosities as he was able to collect, or could afford to purchase.

He lived in the little lonely village of Ballynock, half way up the mountain side, on the portion of the Holybrook estate which belonged to Julian Jefferson. He had always been an admirer and staunch friend of the elder Mr. Jefferson, and at his death had transferred his allegiance to the son, who most resembled him in point of literary tastes and pursuits.

"I hope you are well, Mr. Drumgoole," said Julian, shaking hands with the priest; "you are the man of all others whom I want to see."

"I'm proud to hear it," replied Mr. Drumgoole, while at the same time he saluted Margaret and Effie with a waive of his hand and a semi-circular bow: then, rubbing his plump hands together, he asked, "In what manner can I be serviceable to you, Mr. Jefferson? You have only to say the word."

"Miss Grey has been speaking to me about the Ryans, of Iveagh. Do you think we could induce them to move to Ballynock? It seems they are living in great wretchedness."

"Wretched, as wretched can be," said the priest, cheerily. "But bless your soul, sir! it wouldn't be in the power of mortal man to get Peter out of that pigstye of his. Though I say so that shouldn't, I have no more influence over him than that"—and he snapped his short forefinger and thumb in the air. "Peter never attends to any one of his duties; he's a bad subject, sir; a regular bad subject."

"Now, Margaret," said Julian, smiling, as he turned to Miss Grey, "even if I had been walking over the mountains after Peter, I could have done nothing. When he is too much for our good friend, I should have had but a poor chance. Miss Grey does not think that I attend sufficiently to the welfare of the people about here."

"Or to your own," interposed Margaret.

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Jefferson, in her full pathetic tones of motherly anxiety. "He has no regard to his own health. I have been telling Mr. Drumgoole of the way you sit up at night, Julian, my dear; and you look so pale."

"No one in the world wishes health and happiness to

Mr. Jefferson more than I do," said the priest; "but he's not like others, ma'am, not at all. A person of his ethereal talents can't be expected to conduct himself like us common mortals. Sure, when he has those fine things working on his brains, he'd better let 'em out. If he didn't, ma'am, the brain w'd burst. I assure you it would kill him outright, ma'am."

"Well done, Drumgoole!" said Julian, laughing. "You're always my staunch friend, and recommend me to follow my own way. I am sure you and Maunders look after the poor people, souls and bodies, much better than I could."

"Now, Mr. Drumgoole," said Mrs. Jefferson, reproachfully, "I didn't expect this from you."

"Truth, ma'am, nothing but the solemn truth," said the priest; and with a bow and a slight flourish of his hat in the air, he departed.

"Now come in, girls,-dear," said Mrs. Jefferson, turning to Margaret and Effie; "You must have a glass of wine, and rest yourselves."

"I fear we cannot wait now," said Miss Grey, looking at her watch: "we have but just time to walk to my brother's before dinner."

"Then you must come with me in the carriage as far as the parsonage. That poor soul of a clergyman has no idea how to put his house in order, though he so often preaches to us in church on that subject--and not a woman relation in the world; so I told him I would look at it now and then, and see that the workpeople were doing right. He will be a new man when he gets Fanny to take care of him. Is the day fixed for the marriage yet?"

"Yes; I think it will be next Wednesday week."

"Oh, well! we'll have everything as neat as hands and pins can make them before that time. And your sister, Effie; when is she to be here?"

"On Monday, I hope. Aunt Margaret had a letter from mamma this morning, to say Ellen would be here by the evening train."

"Ellen has never been here since she was a child," said Mrs. Jefferson. "She was a bright, stirring little body then. Is she like you now, my dear?"

"Oh! not at all," exclaimed Effie. "Not the least like me. Ellen is very pretty."

"And what are you, my dear?" said Mrs. Jefferson, patting Effie's soft cheek. By the way, the good lady's designs for Effie's future were very similar to those of Miss Grey. "I've no doubt Ellen is pretty; but there are more people so. Now, dears, step into the little carriage, and we shall go. Samuel walked out with Mr. Maunders, and I expect to meet them somewhere on the road, and bring him back."

Margaret and Effie were not sorry to take advantage of "the lift," as they had had nearly walking enough, and were late besides. Mrs. Jefferson had sent the carriage on with them after it had left her at the parsonage, which she had undertaken in some degree to arrange for Mr. Tatlow, and see that all was as it should be for the reception of the parsoness.

Julian Jefferson accompanied the younger ladies, and was persuaded by his sister, Mrs. Grey, to remain to dinner, and spend the evening at Holybrook Mills.

There was still a variety of needlework on hand for Fanny Grey's trousseau, in the way of delicate frilling, and very neat pocket handkerchiefs, which required hemming, besides innumerable odds and ends of plain and fancy stitchery. But, although the ladies had quite enough to occupy their time with these things, Mrs. Grey and Effie, at Julian's earnest request, spent most of the evening at the piano. Mrs. Grey was an excellent musician, and Effie sang very sweetly; she had a soft voice, rich, clear, and musical, and the lessons which she had during the past months received, had greatly increased its charm. Julian neither sang nor played, excepting on the violin, in his own apartment; but he had all a poet's and an artist's enthusiasm for music and sweet song; and he sat by in silent, dreamy happiness, whilst Effie "sang the loved songs of her own native land," and Julia played their soft and plaintive accompaniments. It was pleasanter, far pleasanter, he acknowledged to himself, than even the lonely hours which he spent amongst books and papers, paints and brushes, in the dingy old room in the Abbey which he considered as peculiarly his own, and between which and the mountains he spent the greater part of his life.

When they were parting that night, he again promised Mar-

garet that he would "see about the Ryan's." "I shall go to Iveagh and Ballynock to-morrow," he said, "and on Monday I shall walk into Glarisford, and tell you what has been the result of my exertions, which, you know Margaret, are only to please you; for either Maunders or Drumgoole would have much more influence with Peter than I should."

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## CHAPTER IX.

THE following Monday—that on which Ellen Walker was expected at her grandfather's—was one of those March days which open in sunshine and brilliancy: trees, grass, shrub, everything spangled over and sparkling with the treasures of the frost. The earth, not wrapped in her solemn winding-sheet of snow, but decked out, and adorned as a bride, in robes of gauzy whiteness, delicate lace work, gems more beautiful, and diamonds more sparkling than were ever set or polished by the most skilful lapidary.

There is nothing more beautiful, nothing more transient than this feathery glory of the hoarfrost in the spring months. Every one knows that a white frost turns to rain, or at least to clammy gloominess; and so it was on this day, as in the afternoon Margaret and Effie sat at the drawing-room window of Rose Cottage, looking up, now and then, from their work; not to admire the garden outside, which in the murky atmosphere looked gloomy enough, with its half-frozen beds, tightly shut crocuses, and dispirited polyanthuses—but to see if there were any hope of the thick dull clouds not falling before six o'clock, the time when Ellen's train was to arrive at Glarisford.

It was now half-past four, and although within the little drawing-room all was comfort and brightness, without, the atmosphere was very dreary.

"There are Mr. Ward and Julian Jefferson," said Effie, looking up as the little iron gate opened, and was then shut to with a ringing sound, which spoke of some impatience in the shutter.

"I must open the hall door for them, as Jenny is gone to Dr. Grant's for the milk," she continued, rising, and hastening to admit the visitors.

Samuel Ward stayed a few minutes in the hall to divest himself of his long olive-green surtout, while Julian—very chilly with the damp frosty air, and the slow pace at which Mr. Ward had walked—entered the drawing-room, and seating himself between the blazing fire and Miss Grey's work-table, said with a long sigh, expressive both of suffering and relief—

"Margaret, I am nearly done to death with turnips!"

"Boiled or unboiled?" asked Margaret.

"Oh, both I believe; but I endeavoured not to listen. How can any one take such an interest in fattening cattle? Turnips, mangolds, beet-root. I detest the subject. Mr. Ward and I passed, first through the farm buildings—I never knew till to-day that I had so many kine in my possession—but stay, I believe they belong to Julius; I hope they do at least. Whosoever they be, Maunders and Mr. Ward spent a full hour discussing them and their probabilities of being fattened. Unfortunate creatures! Then we passed through the fields which are to be sown with turnips, &c. Early Dutch, High Dutch or Low Dutch—I can't answer for the names, but we had disquisitions of tremendous length on the relative merits of each. This was bad enough, although I had only to stand by, and look at the mountains; but afterwards, when Maunders left us, it became necessary for me to listen, and what was worse, to reply to Mr. Ward's questions, opinions, and plans about some wretched kine which he is preparing for the Dublin market."

"Well," said Margaret, "I hope you gave him good advice on the subject."

Julian shrugged his shoulders. "I wish man was not a carnivorous animal," he said.

"Perhaps like Alphonso the Wise, you think things in general might be arranged somewhat better than they are."

"It is difficult not to wish for a few alterations: but above all things, I do at present detest turnips and fatted kine."

"I hope thou art quite well, Margaret," said Samuel Ward, entering the room cheerily; "Julian has no doubt been telling thee what a pleasant walk we have had through

the farm. Thank thee,"—as Effie placed an arm-chair at the fire—"but really the room feels uncommonly warm; so much so, as to make this feel a little uncomfortable," he continued, laying his sleek, broad-brimmed hat upon the table. "I hope thy father is quite well?"

"As well as usual, thank you," replied Margaret; "he is at present taking his afternoon nap in the dining-room, but he will soon come in. You will not, I hope, return to Holybrook until you see him?"

"No, no; I do not think I have much to hurry me, really now I do not; and if thou wilt lend me this morning's paper, I shall just sit here by the fire and read until he comes. George Grey is one of my oldest friends—ten to fifteen years older than myself; yes, ten to fifteen years."

So saying, Samuel Ward, seating himself in the arm-chair before the fire, took the newspaper and commenced its perusal. The passages which struck him most he read in a voice, audible, although below his breath—pointing them occasionally with "Ah!s" and "Oh!s" more or less emphatic.

Julian had fallen into a reverie, as sitting silently beside Miss Grey's work-table, he took up a piece of braid, and absently cut it into small shreds.

"Margaret," he said at length, "what do you think of the transmigration of souls?"

"It is a subject I have thought very little about. It would be like losing my identity to fancy I had been anyone else, even in a former state of existence. I neither believe in it nor like it. I prefer turnips as a subject for conversation."

"It certainly is a rather thread-bare subject," continued Julian, "but it is an attractive one to me; and tell me how otherwise can you account for the strange feelings or recollections which come into our minds; memories of things and places which in this state of existence we certainly have never seen—have had no opportunity of seeing?"

"We may have dreamed of them, perhaps."

"And whence the dreams?"

Margaret shook her head. "I told you the subject was too deep for me," she said.

"But you have experienced the sensation?"

"Oh, surely. I believe every one has felt it."



"I am sometimes," said Julian, "tempted to think that in a former state of existence I may have been a subject of the Pharaohs, one of the Pharaohs themselves for aught I know; there is frequently in my mind such a vivid recollection, perception, or whatever may be the fitting term—of Egypt in all its glory—of a scene which may have been enacted——"

"'In Thebes' streets some four thousand years ago,'" said Margaret, smiling.

"Yes; I wish I were able to give to my vision a more tangible form. Turner, I fancy, must have experienced something of the same feeling. His style would seem to approach to what I require."

Samuel Ward lowered the newspaper which he had been reading and looked round. "Art thou speaking of one of our ministering friends?" he asked.

"No, sir; I speak of the artist."

"Ah, I thought I caught the name of Turner; but thou dost not probably recollect Jonathan Turner, who visited the nation in '26?"

"No," replied Julian, "if I did it would indeed be a strong evidence of metempsychosis."

"Me—temp—sy—; what dost thou say? I don't understand half the words which the young people make use of now. But hast thou read this paper? Here is a part relative to the fattening of bullocks, which will really interest thee."

"To-morrow, sir; to-morrow," said Julian, deprecatingly. "You see it is growing dusk."

"Dusk, yes, duskish," said the elder gentleman, taking off his spectacles, and rubbing them carefully, in his large lawn handkerchief.

"And yet," pursued Julian, turning to Margaret, "the limner's art alone would not be sufficient to express a scene in which so many of the muses should lend their aid."

"What is your vision, Julian? I should like to hear it," said Margaret; "but please do not cut any more of that braid, or I shall not have enough left to finish my work."

Julian laid down the scissors and the braid, and clasping his hands together behind his head, leaned listlessly back, in an attitude more negligent than graceful.

"I certainly must have been an Egyptian," he said, looking up to the ceiling.

"Thou must have been an Egyptian!" repeated Samuel Ward. "Now, I'd like to be able to understand thee."

"I wish I were able to understand myself, sir."

Samuel Ward turned again to the fire, and holding one hand toward it enjoyed the blaze, but with a puzzled look upon his florid countenance, whilst Julian Jefferson continued—"I must some day try to set forth my fancy either with pen or pencil. I seem to stand upon an eminence, and to see beneath me some great City of the Past, not ruined nor fallen to decay, and on whose buildings, perfect in their brilliant ornamentation, and sublime in their colossal proportions, Time has not left a trace. Temples, Towers and Palace, Obelisk, Pyramid, and solemn Sphynx still stand in awful and majestic grandeur. Through the streets, and avenues formed by the colossal figures of kings; along the colonnades; beneath the Hundred Gateways, throng a motley multitude; whose voices mingle confusedly with the triumphant music which ever and anon swells and rises above all other sounds; whilst the whole scene is wrapped in the glowing splendours of a sunset of such gorgeous magnificence as our poor northern climes can never know. What if I had been Pharaoh looking down from his palace upon the solemnities which installed the wise young Hebrew as second in his kingdom."

"Or, better still, Joseph himself taking an evening walk upon one of the Pyramids after the ceremonies of the day were ended," said Margaret Grey, laughing.

"A bright idea, surely," exclaimed Julian, "and it would be much more agreeable to have been this most favoured of men, than even Rameses himself."

"Euphemia!" whispered Samuel Ward, leaning toward Effie, who sat on a low chair near him—and while he spoke he held the newspaper between himself and the table where Margaret and the young man sat—"Euphemia, hast thou any idea what they are talking about?"

"Not much, indeed," replied Effie, looking up with a serious face, which the sparkle in her eyes belied.

"Dear, dear! Pharaoh! Joseph! I know sister Charlotte was anxious that Julian should stay at home to-day. I wish I

had encouraged him to do so. Now canst thou tell me, Euphemia, does he often talk in such—such an unusual way?"

"Only sometimes," replied Effie.

Samuel Ward laid a hand on each of his knees and looked musingly into the fire. "Charlotte has a great care," he said, as if speaking to himself, "a very great care. Pharaoh! Joseph! Dear, dear! I must speak to Dr. Grant. I believe," he continued, raising his voice, "I believe I shall just step down to Cousin Sarah's, if thou wilt stay quietly here till I come back, Julian. Wilt thou?"

"With all my heart," replied Julian.

Samuel Ward put his large hat on his head, inducted himself once more into the olive green surtout, and as Effie assisted him to find his gloves and umbrella, he said, "Thou wilt be sure not to let the young man leave till I return."

"Certainly," replied Effie, looking very serious; and Samuel Ward, much disturbed in mind, walked forth into the murky evening air.

Julian scarcely heeded the old man's departure. "Yes," he continued, rising and taking up a position on the now vacant hearthrug. "Of all the characters of ancient history, that of the patriarch Joseph appears to approach nearest to perfection. Wise and discreet above all who dwelt in the land; blest with the blessings of the heaven above and blessings of the deep that lieth under; grace, wisdom, knowledge, honour, riches, power; the precious things of heaven and the precious things of earth in all their fulness. Was ever romance related by the subtlest pen, conceived by the most vivid imagination, so full of thrilling interest as the simply-told story which every child knows, and which gave us a satisfying real pleasure long before we comprehended the reason why, or understood that it 'was wisdom that defended him from his enemies; kept him safe from those that lay in wait; forsook him not, nor left him in bonds till she brought him the sceptre of the kingdom and gave him perpetual glory.'"

"The character of Joseph appears faultless as far as has been related to us," said Margaret; "and does it not strike you that the nearer a human being approaches to perfection, the stronger will be our feeling against the transmigration of

souls. It is a most uncomfortable idea. I can't tell you how much I dislike it."

Julian looked into the mirror which stood before him on the mantel-piece, and a merry smile played over his face.

"The transformation must indeed have been grievous," he said, "if—laying aside all greater things—this highly-favoured mortal should have been condemned to take an outward form like mine; for you know Joseph was the most beautiful of men. Eastern bards without number have sung his praises, and Mahomet devotes a whole chapter of the Koran to the description of his beauty; whilst my long, lank visage is enough to trouble a wiser man than the patriarch himself."

"Nonsense, Julian," said Margaret, smiling; "your face does very well, and I do not believe you trouble your head as to whether you are handsome or not."

"Well, may be not; as long as I have my brother's handsome face to look at I shall be satisfied. I can have a better view of it than if it were on my own shoulders. Where is Mr. Ward?"

"Gone to visit Mrs. Stevens."

"I did not see him go."

"But you spoke to him."

"Did I? If so I must have spoken from the past ages of Egypt's glory."

"I suppose so: but, Julian, I want you now to come down to the present time of poor Ireland's poverty. Have you done anything yet about the Ryans?"

"The Ryans," repeated Julian; "was I to do anything about the Ryans?"

"Do you not recollect that I asked you if there could not be a house found for Peter, in Ballynock?"

"Forgive me, Margaret, but I really never since thought of the Ryans. I feel very penitent, although, indeed, I do not think there would be the slightest use in meddling with them."

"I am not sure of that," said Margaret; "it could at least do no harm to try to conciliate Peter. I fear Julius has been too harsh with him. If the man has any affection in his nature, I think he expends it on those poor hounds of his."

"Julius should not have had them shot. By-the-bye, do not you expect Ellen Walker this evening?"

"Yes, Wilfred is to bring her from the train. They will soon be here now."

"I fear I must inflict my company upon you till they arrive, for Mr. Ward has to be convoyed home in your brother's car, and you know I am taking care of him."

"I suspect Mr. Ward thinks he is taking care of you, Julian," said Margaret, smiling; "but which ever is in charge I hope you will both stay and have tea with us. I must leave you by yourself for a short time while I look after household affairs and see if my father is ready to join us."

"I have not seen Ellen since she was quite a child. Is she like her sister?" asked Julian.

"No; she is taller, and not like Effie in any way, I think."

"Ah, now I recollect. She was very thin and had large eyes. I used to escape as far as possible from her and her sister."

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## CHAPTER X.

It was nearly seven o'clock when Wilfred Grey drove up to Rose Cottage, bringing with him his niece Ellen Walker.

Everything had been prepared for their reception for full half-an-hour, and old Mr. Grey, seated in his large arm-chair beside the fire, was becoming very impatient.

Samuel Ward had not yet returned: a conversation with Dr. Grant had relieved his mind, and that young man having promised to walk back with him to Rose Cottage, afterwards, he had consented to remain and take a cup of tea with his cousins, Sarah and Kitty. The latter lady was anxious to have some conversation with him on the Great Dragon Company, whose awful threats still haunted her quiet, and otherwise tranquil mind.

Julian Jefferson had taken from Mr. Grey's book case a volume of the "Penny Cyclopædia," and was so deeply absorbed by Propylæ, Obelisks, Sphinxes, and Crio-Sphinxes, that he neither knew nor cared how time passed by, until he

was roused by the opening of the drawing-room door, the rush of cool night air from the hall without, and the entrance of Margaret, Effie, and a girl taller than either aunt or sister, and so closely muffled in winter wrappings as to make her slender, girlish figure look almost womanly. Mr. Grey's impatience had become too much for his rheumatism, and he was rising slowly and with difficulty from his chair when Ellen hastened forward, and kissing him, fondly said: "Dear grandpapa, do not stand up; please do not. I am so sorry we have kept you waiting. The train was rather late; they said the foggy air made the rails slippery, and then Uncle Wilfred's horse slipped, too, so that we could not come quickly. But I shall not be a moment taking off my hat and shawl, and then I have ever so much love to give you from mamma, and papa, and Charley, and so much to tell you about them all."

"Well, my girl," said the old man, "that will repay us for having waited so long, and also the sight of your own bright face, which as well as my old eyes can see, has lost nothing of its pleasant looks since I saw it last. Here is an old friend of yours," continued Mr. Grey, turning to Julian; "He has been waiting all the evening to see you."

"You do not recollect me?" said Julian, rousing himself, and endeavouring by a cordiality of manner, rather unusual in him, to verify the old man's words.

"No," replied Ellen, whilst her cheeks, already brightened by the frosty air, grew brighter still. "I am afraid I do not."

Ellen Walker was more than good-looking; she was very lovely, although as yet her beauty had not reached its full bloom. It was of that style not unfrequent in the southern counties of Ireland, in different degrees of which hers was perhaps one of the most perfect.

Her complexion was very clear, although not very fair; her hair dark, plentiful, and rising a little from the broad white forehead—not in the *crepé* style, which art often accomplishes, but in long undulations—just sufficient to make the light and shade more decided over its glossy surface. If left to itself, Ellen's hair would have fallen in long ringlets over neck and shoulders, but she generally wore it either plaited in thick coils at the back of her pretty head, or confined in one of the nets which often prove such a resource in a lady's toilet when

time presses, and the hair is long and luxuriant. Her face was oval, and the features regular and soft in all their lines; the nose straight and the lips rosy, mobile, and full of expression: the eyes were large, clear, glistening, and as blue as were ever those of Saint Kevin's poor Cathleen; they were both soft and bright, ready to sparkle with mirth or to languish in almost sleepy beauty, half veiled by their long dark lashes. It was a very lovely head, and set daintily on a slender figure, which, although rather exceeding the average height of woman, was easy and graceful in all its movements.

As she gave her hand to Julian Jefferson, and he looked into the bright ingenuous face, he could scarcely believe that this was really the thin little girl with large eyes whom he had met, but tried to shun, ten years ago. But thin, brown little girls with large eyes have often a way of growing up into very lovely women.

At eight o'clock Samuel Ward returned, escorted by Dr. Grant.

"Really Wilfred," said the former, as he seated himself by the fire, "I am quite pleased to see thee, quite pleased. The roads are uncommonly slippery to-night, and it would have been a serious thing if we had to walk out to the Abbey; besides"—and he looked askance towards Julian—"I am uncommonly pleased that thou hast come."

"Well, Mr. Ward, my car is at your service whenever you wish to go."

"Whenever I wish to go, thank thee, yes. Then perhaps the present would be a suitable time. I think sister Charlotte was anxious for thee to have a good night's rest, Julian."

"Yes indeed," said the young man, "I have so much to do before I sleep to-night, that I suppose it is better for us to return home. Will you not come out to the Abbey soon?" he continued, turning to Miss Grey.

"I think we shall scarcely be able to go to Holybrook before the wedding day: we have so much to do before then."

"In the millinery way?" asked Wilfred.

"Yes, these girls have to choose their dresses, and get them made, so our hands will be full."

"You will open the campaign to-morrow at Mrs. Johnston's

ware-rooms, I suppose," said Wilfred Grey. "She is the cleverest woman I know at drawing up long bills."

"Yes, but Fanny is not married every day."

"Heaven forbid! As it is, our house is nearly uninhabitable between garments and eggshells. I am sure Fanny is making clothing enough to last her till she is three score and ten."

"Now, is that the case?" asked Samuel Ward. "Dear me!"

"You know nothing of such troubles, Mr. Ward," said Wilfred; "you have no womankind to disturb your house."

"No womankind, no, none but Betty," said Samuel Ward; and his mind reverted to his own home, where reigned a very despotic housekeeper, who having risen from the ranks—being first thorough servant, and latterly housekeeper—was perhaps more exacting and formidable than if she had always occupied that station. She had also married Samuel Ward's confidential man, and had got the upperhand, both of her master and her husband, as well as of the household in general.

A nephew named Richard Fletcher had for some years been residing with Mr. Ward, and the uncle had devolved upon this young man the greater part of his business cares. In a commercial point of view the nephew was exceedingly useful, and would also have been an agreeable addition to the household, but that there too often raged dire warfare between him and Betty. He was not willing to acknowledge her sway, either over himself or his uncle, and so the collisions were frequent and severe. Samuel Ward was much attached to his nephew, and did not think of parting with his housekeeper as a possibility, but no elderly man ever loved peace and quietness more than he did, and he hoped that if war did break out during his absence, peace might be restored before his return.

"No womankind except Betty."

"You are a wise man, Mr. Ward, to keep clear of such troubles and expenses."

"Well, as to that, Betty is a saving woman, a very saving woman!" and he thought how very uncomfortable his housekeeper sometimes made him by her desire to save his substance.

"You will bring the girls out to us before the wedding, Margaret," said Wilfred Grey. "I am sorry that we are not likely to have more amusement for them. I never before heard of a wedding without a dance."



"And is there really to be no dancing?" asked Ellen.

"I fear not, Nell; your Aunt Fanny for some, I suppose good reason of her own, says there must not; and Julia and I have as much as promised that there shall not be, even for the workmen. Now, Mr. Ward, I am sure that even you would not object to the young people having some amusement at a wedding—a little dancing for instance."

"Well, really now, as to that I can't quite say. Dancing, thou art aware, is not approved by our Society, but then for workmen I don't know; and I allow that a wedding does seem a time for some social amusement; but if Paul Tatlow and thy sister feel an apprehension of duty regarding it, that makes a difference, of course."

"An apprehension of contrariness, I suspect," said Wilfred. "Fanny knows how much I wish to give the people I employ, as well as these poor girls, some diversion."

"It does not seem unreasonable for thee to wish to do so on occasion of thy sister's marriage. What wouldst thou think now of providing some more sober entertainment, a lecture or a magic lantern, or something of that kind, which might amuse and instruct both thy guests and the workpeople. That large new loft, which thou built lately, would be quite the thing."

"And will you deliver the lecture, Mr. Ward."

"No thank thee, my gifts do not lie in that way. But I heard to-day that Professor Thomas, a man of colour, who is well qualified to lecture on almost any subject, is now in Glarisford; he has a young wife and family, and is remarkably poor—indeed he looks very much to friends for support—and it would really be kind in thee to give him the job. His terms are by no means high."

"I am afraid the kindness would be so much greater to the lecturer than the audience, that it could scarcely be done."

"Well, it just rose in my mind, and I thought I would spread it before thee. If the other amusement were to be only for the working classes, it would seem to me almost unobjectionable—that is, if thy sister and Paul Tatlow felt easy—that of course settles thy mind."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Wilfred, "but I suppose it settles my actions. Now sir, if you are ready we shall go."

## CHAPTER XI.

"Now girls," said Margaret Grey, when breakfast was ended on the following morning, "as soon as you are ready we had better walk into town, to see about the wedding dresses. Mrs. Johnston requires time, for she is the best milliner and dressmaker in Glarisford, and always has her hands full. When you have unpacked and arranged your clothes, Nell, we shall go."

"Oh," replied Ellen, "my things are unpacked; Effie was up early this morning, and did all, settled them in the drawers and everything, so we can go at once. Come Effie, for I do not know where you have put any of my clothes."

The girls were soon equipped for walking, both looking fresh and pretty in their dark blue mantles and little black hats, ornamented with Grebe feathers.

The mantle was particularly becoming to Ellen's tall and graceful figure, and the beautiful coils of glossy dark hair, not to mention the lovely face, would have set off the most unbecoming of all the hats yet invented for the trial of ladies' looks.

The clouds had passed away without rain, and the morning was bright and sunny, so the walk into Glarisford was a very pleasant one. The broad, steep road, which last night's frost had completely dried, was clean and dustless, its car tracks shining smooth as polished oak, and every angle of the cut stone which edged its neat footway sparkling as if set with brilliants. Below lay the town, with its heavy old cathedral, its church spires, chimneys, factories, and lines of streets, rising on the opposite side of the broad river, which glittered brightly beneath the rays of the morning sun, and bore on its bosom many a tall ship and smoky steamer. Raised on an abrupt hill at a bend of the river, and almost in the centre of the town, stood the fine old castle, which had been for many centuries in the possession of the Barons, Earls, or Marquises of Glarisford. The present Marquis, although a young man, had already rendered himself very popular, by generally residing in his baronial castle, and mixing more with the neighbouring gentry, both of town and country, than had been customary

with his predecessors. He was besides a close friend of the Earl of Carlisle, the most popular Viceroy who ever ruled in Dublin Castle; he whose ready pen, whose graceful speech, and last, not least, whose acts and deeds were always on the side of truth, progress, and enlightenment.

By kind interest in the prosperity of Glarisford, the Marquis showed that he had profited by the example set before him in the noble, gifted, and generous governor of his native country.

"How grand the Castle looks to-day," said Ellen, as the three ladies walked down the hill together. "I long to visit it again, and see the view from Strongbow's Tower. Should we have time to-day, Aunt Margaret?"

"Scarcely, I am afraid," replied Miss Grey, "but it depends on how long your shopping is likely to continue. Have you much to do?"

"I have not very much," replied Ellen, "besides the dress for Aunt Fanny's wedding, I only want a bonnet, and boots and shoes, and gloves, and some silk for mamma, and some cuffs and ribbons. Oh! yes, and I want to buy photographs for papa, and a book for Charlie, and some trimming for my new spring dress, and one or two other things."

"Quite enough to occupy one morning. I think you must leave Strongbow's Tower for some other day."

"Should we not call to see Mrs. Stevens and Aunt Kitty?" asked Effie, as they were about to pass Dr. Grant's gate.

"Perhaps it may do when we are returning," replied Margaret.

"I know it will be woeful if we do not call some time," said Effie, "for she is so anxious to see Nell; and there is Dr. Grant standing at the window. Had we not better go in now?"

"It is rather early, and will be better when we are coming back," said Margaret.

Mrs. Johnston's establishment was in the centre of the town, and thither the three ladies repaired at once.

It was no common shop, for the entrance was through a hall door, at which you knocked, and on being admitted you passed through a long hall, up a winding staircase, and were ushered into two lofty apartments with folding doors between, and hung round with mantles, ribbons, flowers, and silks of every hue.

"I am glad it is this week you require the dresses, Miss

Grey," said Mrs. Johnston, when Margaret had told her the errand on which she and her nieces had come, "for we really have our hands so full while there is so much company at the Castle, and in the ensuing weeks before the ball I am sure we shall not know which way to turn. I can never get hands enough for all the work that will be required. You have heard, I suppose, that His Excellency is to be at the Castle next month, and the Marquis is to give such a ball as has not been in Glarisford for years. I declare to you, Miss Grey, there are ladies ordering their dresses already, and of course there'll be more every day. I've ordered a large number of splendid dresses down from Dublin, and I mean to go up myself to choose the flowers. You, and your young ladies, will look in on them when they arrive, I hope; and you'll be good enough to tell Mrs. Wilfred when you see her. She'll require some of them, I'm sure."

"I do not go to balls, Mrs. Johnston," replied Margaret, "and you know I could not send these girls alone."

"No, surely! but you'll find many ready and willing to chaperone two such sweet young ladies," said the milliner, as with the eye of an artist, she laid a rose-coloured silk beside Effie, and arranged a blue silk of equal brilliancy in graceful folds over Ellen's shoulder. Then stepping back a few paces, she exclaimed, "Only look at that, Miss Grey! look at the effect. The Earl of Carlisle, himself, never saw such a lovely contrast as they would make. Miss Effie is made for pink, Miss Ellen for blue. Or stay," she continued, reversing the colours, "Why, I do declare they look equally well in either. I tell you, young ladies, I know parties who would give a thousand a year for such complexions as you have: if you can wear pink and blue equally well, you can wear any colour in the rainbow. There's the Marchioness now, handsome as she is, can't go within three yards of either blue or mauve, and her sister, Lady Sandihurst, looks a perfect fright in pink. Some ladies have a great cross in their complexions, I assure you."

"The silks are beautiful, Mrs. Johnston," said Margaret, "but I think for the present, we must be satisfied with the white tarlateen and cherry-coloured ribbons."

"Yes, Miss Grey, and nothing in the world looks so sweet

on young ladies as white; but then, for the ball, you know, something different might be required, something more *recherché*, you know."

"Do you think mamma would like us to get such dresses?" asked Ellen, whose young heart was not untouched by the beautiful silks. "If we are invited to the ball, I think I shall write home to ask her if she would like them."

"Oh! Ellen," said the prudent Effie, "we shall not require them. Such dresses would be quite too expensive for us."

Ellen took the soft, glittering fabric in her hand, and surveyed it lovingly, her pretty head turned a little to one side.

"You'll decide on taking it, I am sure," said Mrs. Johnston, "and I promise you, Miss Ellen, I'll have it made up if you only give me the order two days before the ball."

"Thank you, Mrs. Johnston," said Margaret, "that certainly gives us leisure for consideration. And now, we must not waste any more of your precious time. You will be sure to have the white dresses sent home this week."

"I shall have all to your perfect satisfaction, Miss Grey, and all at your house in good time. The last of Miss Fanny's dresses went out to Holybrook on Saturday."

Julius Jefferson had entered the room unnoticed by any of the ladies, so fully were their minds occupied by the pretty wares which Mrs. Johnston had spread before their eyes, and as they turned to go all looked the surprise which they felt on seeing the close proximity of the handsome young Captain, who stood beside them, hat in hand, his bright eyes sparkling with half-concealed merriment.

"I feel very culpable for this intrusion," he said, as he shook hands with Miss Grey and her nieces, "and I should certainly have made my presence known at once, but that I was so dazzled by the loveliness of the gems which Mrs. Johnston's art had placed in such brilliant setting, that I remained mute."

"Yes, indeed, Captain," said the modiste, "It would be almost flying in the face of Providence for young ladies like these not to take advantage of such complexions. And then the contrast! You'll take the silks, I am sure, Miss Grey."

"Of course, Margaret," said Julius, seriously, "you will not deny such a privilege to our great Glarisford ball. The

whole assembly will instantly separate into two divisions; one for the pink, the other for the blue."

"I should not like to cause division," said Margaret, smiling, "But what *did* bring you here, Julius? I did not think that millinery was in your line."

"Mrs. Johnston knows better," said the young man, turning to the lady of the house, "How often have I been here during the last week with messages about Lady Cornelia's scarlet feather? You have no idea of my capabilities, Margaret."

"No, I suppose not; but now we shall leave you to arrange such important business with Mrs. Johnston. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Captain Jefferson, "I am going down to Kerry for the remainder of the week, and shall not probably be back before the wedding festivities begin."

"One word, Miss Walker," he continued, as Ellen, with a parting glance at the rose-coloured silk, was following her aunt, "Will you not promise me a large share of the pink lady's favour at the Glarisford Ball?"

Ellen smiled, "I fear there will be no pink lady there," she said, "at least, no pink lady for whose actions I shall be accountable."

"Well, without looking so far into futurity, promise me as many dances as you can spare at the Holybrook wedding."

"But I am told there is not to be any dancing," said Ellen.

"A wedding without a dance!" exclaimed Captain Jefferson, with a look of horror, "Impossible, ! Even though it is the Parson who is married. There must, at least, be a ball for the workpeople, in which we must join. And be it in drawing-room or barn, remember that you have promised to dance with me. If you do not, I shall think that you have not yet forgotten or forgiven the adventure of the Dead Man's Cave."

"But, Captain Jefferson, there is not the least hope of a dance," said Ellen, looking very doleful. "Aunt Fanny has made Uncle Wilfred promise that there should not be."

"*Nil desperandum*," said the Captain; "I would wager anything that we shall manage it some way or other."

"I do not understand betting," said Ellen.

"It is not hard to learn," said Julius. "I am willing to wager—let me see," he continued, looking round on Mrs.

Johnston's treasures, "anything you please against a pair of gloves, that I shall get up a dance by hook or by crook."

"I should always rather bet against a thing I am wishing very much for, for then I fancy I shall gain it."

"All right," said the Captain, laughing; "let it stand thus: I lose my wager if I gain the dance."

"You have not the slightest chance: you do not know how positive Aunt Fanny is; therefore I accept the terms," said Ellen, smiling and blushing.

Then Margaret and Effie, who during this conversation had been in deep consultation with Mrs. Johnston concerning trimmings, called Ellen; and Captain Jefferson, turning to Effie, said—

"I have brought you the music of 'Come to Glengariff.'"

"Thanks," said Effie, taking the little roll of music from his hand, "it was very kind of you to remember it."

"Did you think I could forget? Lady Cornelia sang it last evening; but some songs require some voices. Good-bye. Now Mrs. Johnston, what about the scarlet feather?"

Mrs. Johnston's husband was the chief bookseller and stationer in Glarisford, and his shop was under her show-rooms. Miss Grey and her nieces, who had some purchases to make, were, after descending a dark stair, admitted by a back door into the shop.

Effie bought some note paper and envelopes; and Ellen was not long in selecting the book which she wished to send to her brother; but the photograph for her father's birthday present was more difficult to choose.

Whilst she was looking over the smaller photographs, Mr. Johnston called her attention to a large and very handsome view of Glarisford Castle, which he took from a portfolio on the counter.

It was striking and beautiful; an idealised view of the Castle certainly, but, although altered in some respects, still very like the original.

"How papa would like this," said Ellen, turning to her sister; but Effie thought the picture was too expensive, besides being almost too large to send by post. Eighteen shillings was the price, and Ellen had not intended to spend so much upon her present.

"But it is so pretty," she said, "and papa would so like it. Do you think it quite too dear?" and, turning to ask for Margaret's opinion, she saw that Julian Jefferson stood beside her.

"My brother," he said, "has some affairs about feathers or ribbons to arrange with Mrs. Johnston; whilst I, who am not so fortunate as to be trusted with such important commissions, have been waiting outside upon the pavement, until Miss Grey, who has just gone out of the shop, told me that I should find you and your sister here. Do you think that pretty?" he continued, looking at the picture which Ellen held in her hand; "photographs do not seem to me very pleasing: either paintings or engravings are generally so far superior."

"I think this beautiful," said Ellen.

"Perhaps in this case," said the young man, smiling, "the photographer may have done more than justice to the original. You must judge for yourself the next time you come to Holybrook Abbey."

"Indeed! Have you the painting from which this was taken?"

"Yes."

"And who was the painter?"

"It is from a sketch which I took some years ago, and afterwards painted principally from memory. The very peculiar and beautiful light in which I one evening saw the Castle, with the glowing sunset sky above it, and the broad, still river beneath, reflecting sky and earth, made such a deep impression on my mind, that I could not resist the temptation of trying, however feebly, to transfer a part at least of its beauty to canvas."

"I did not know you were a painter," said Ellen. "How happy it must make you to have the power of catching and retaining such a scene as this."

"Ah! if you had only seen the original," said Julian, "the true original, I mean—the sunset view of which I tried to paint some resemblance. Perhaps some time you may, although sunsets do not often repeat themselves."

"May I paper up the photo, and send it with your other parcel?" asked Mr. Johnston, softly rubbing his hands, as he bent over the counter.

"Oh yes, if you please—I do not know," said Ellen, a



little confused between her wish to have the picture and her sister's opinion of its expensiveness and unsuitability for going by post. "Effie, do not you think papa would like it best?"

"This is one of your own copies, Johnston?" said Julian, taking up the photograph. "It is quite imperfect; see the smudges in two places. Where is the one I gave you to copy from?"

"Here, sir, perfectly safe," said the shopkeeper, drawing out a larger and much clearer photograph from the portfolio. "I have not certainly been able to come up to that; but mine is greatly admired, I assure you, and I have sold a great number of copies."

"Take it, if you like, Nell, dear," said Effie; "I am sure papa will be very much pleased with it."

"Nay," said Julian, "but you must not send any of these 'smudgy' ones to Mr. Walker. Do ask your father to accept this one of mine; it was taken in Dublin, and I have others like it. Indeed you will greatly oblige me by doing so; you have no idea how much pleasure it gives a poor artist to have his works appreciated."

Thus offered, there was no alternative but to accept the picture, and to promise to send it to Lowbridge, in time to arrive on Mr. Walker's birthday; but both the girls felt fears and misgivings lest Julian might have heard their conference as to the too great expense of the picture.

"And now," said the young man, turning to Effie, "when will you come to see the original? Your aunt told me you intended visiting the Castle to-day."

"We cannot see the original without a sun, setting behind it, can we?" said Effie, smiling; "and I think we have so much shopping to day, that we must defer our visit. Aunt Margaret went to a shop at the other end of the street, and we were to meet her there."

"If to-morrow be fine," said Julian, "may I have the pleasure of calling for you at Rose Cottage?—as I told Miss Grey you could not go without me for a guide; there are paths round the Castle, which even Margaret does not know; few, indeed, know them so well as I do." The girls thanked Mr. Jefferson, and having arranged that he should call for them on the morrow, bid him good-bye.

"But, Aunt Margaret," said Ellen, when on their way home she related to her aunt the manner in which she had obtained the photograph for her father; "I so much wish Mr. Jefferson had not come into the shop. I am nearly certain that he must have heard us saying that we should like to buy it, but that it was so expensive: and then for him to give it—indeed it was dreadful!"

"Just the way you got the Noah's Ark from Mr. Tatlow, when you were a child," said Margaret, smiling.

"Oh! do not say that, please; surely Mr. Jefferson will know that we could not have meant him to hear. Oh! what ought I to have done?" and, with anxious eyes and fast-rising colour, Ellen looked into her aunt's face.

"Nothing but what you did do, dear Nell," replied Miss Grey; "and whether Julian heard what you said or not, makes little difference: he is so utterly oblivious with regard to all money matters, that I am sure there was no connection in his mind between the photograph and the price; besides, you know it was not one which ever was to be sold. He was anxious that you should send a good copy to Lowbridge: you were quite right in accepting it; and I am sure it will gratify your father very much to receive it as a present from Julian."

"I should rather have sent papa a present from myself," said Ellen; and she walked on in silence until they had nearly reached home, when—interrupting Margaret and Effie, who were in the midst of an interesting discussion on the relative merits of tucks and flounces—she asked, "Who is Lady Cornelia?"

"She is the Marquis's youngest sister; a beautiful girl—the *belle* of last London season."

"And does Capt. Jefferson buy feathers and ribbons for her?"

"I do not know more than what we heard Julius himself say," replied Margaret. "I suppose he brought some message from her to Mrs. Johnston. He is often at the Castle. I think he is going to the West with Lord Glarisford. Did he not tell you so, Effie?"

"Yes; there is a large party from the Castle going to a hunting-lodge belonging to the Marquis. I forget where it is: somewhere near Killarney, I think."

"What a gay life they lead," said Ellen; and, as she opened the green gate, she sighed.

## CHAPTER XII.

"EFFIE," said Ellen Walker on the following morning, when the two girls were seated together in the breakfast-room. "Effie, what can have become of my money? I can only find about five-and-eightpence; and I had so much yesterday."

"Only five-and-eightpence!" repeated Effie, looking round at her sister, who, with flushed cheeks and hair pushed back from her forehead, was gazing at the various parcels which she had taken out of her leather bag. There were little parcels wrapped in the brittle straw paper which soft goods' shops affect; parcels made up in the more substantial wrappings used by stationers; a paste-board box, containing crushable articles of millinery; innumerable little squares of thin paper, on which were inscribed the names of several firms in Glarisford, having accounts beneath of pounds, shillings, and pence; and, lastly, a leather porte-monnaie, lying on its back with all its empty pockets wide open, while beside it on the table were two half-crowns, a fourpenny-bit, and a little pile of halfpence.

"We were in a great number of shops; and I think I saw you at several ribbon and trimming counters while Aunt Margaret and I were buying the more substantial articles," said Effie, who was not much surprised at her sister's difficulty; for Ellen's money, she knew, had a peculiar facility in taking wings to itself and flying away; and what was more remarkable, there was never very much to show for it. Effie, with the same allowance, had better clothes, and more of them, besides always keeping some little overplus in her purse for emergencies.

"What has become of it, Nell?" she asked, smiling, as she looked at the distressed countenance. "You did not seem to buy so very much yesterday. The wedding dress was not expensive; and besides it and the spring dress, what did you buy?"

"I bought a feather for 17s. 6d."

"Did you? That was almost too much to pay for a feather."

"It is very pretty; but perhaps I could have done without it."

"And what else did you buy, dear? If you really wanted the things, you know it is all right."

"I did want most of them; perhaps not quite all. But, indeed, I could not have spent so much money. See all these wispy little bills. I can make nothing of them."

"Let us see," said Effie, taking a pencil and paper, and writing down the items one by one.

"Six yards of blue ribbon, at 2s. 6d. per yard, 15s. Why did you buy so much of that, Nell?"

"Oh, because it was such a lovely colour for sashes; and I was sure we should want it some time."

"Tennyson's Poems, 9s. 6d."

"That is for Charley."

"Fifteen yards of velvet ribbon, at 10d. What is that for?"

"Oh, you know, I thought my purple cashmere could be made as good as new if it had a nice trimming; so I bought that."

"Three pair of French gloves, 9s.; two pair of boots, one pair slippers, £1 12s. 6d; flowers, 7s. 6d."—so Effie proceeded, while Ellen, with one arm round her sister's neck and the other supporting her tearful face, looked on earnestly, as if she expected that some mistake might be discovered, and a little ready-money be the result of the calculation.

"They are all right as far as I can see," said Effie, as she added up the items; "and, deducting what you bought from the money you had, there could not be more than 5s. 6d. left; so you have lost none—indeed, you have a few pence more."

"Oh, but indeed I did not mean to spend so much; and how can I pay Mrs. Johnston for making my dresses? And then if we should be invited to the ball at Glarisford Castle!"

"I daresay some of the dresses we have may do—your pink tarlatan is nearly new; and I think I have enough money to pay Mrs. Johnston."

"But Effie, darling, I could not let you pay for both; and then what would you have for the ball?"

"My white lace would look very well, if it were nicely washed and done up."

"And oh!" exclaimed Ellen, "the blue ribbon which I

bought will look charming; and we shall be pink and blue, even without Mrs. Johnston's beautiful silks."

"What is that," she continued, starting (as a loud knock sounded at the hall door), and trying to smooth down the mass of wavy hair, which she had for the last half-hour been pushing back from her forehead, and twining her fingers through, till the thick plaits had fallen dishevelled on her shoulders. "It must be some visitor. Can I get away? I am sure I am such a figure."

"You do look as if you had been out in a gale, Nell, but you cannot escape; there is no door except that into the hall, and I hear Jenny already admitting the visitor. It must be Julian Jefferson; you know he proposed going with us to the Castle to-day. He is a poet, and will make every allowance for your wild appearance. You are only making matters worse by pinning your plaits together in that way. Perhaps Mr. Jefferson will not see that there is anything astray. Poets' eyes are raised so high that they sometimes do not observe terrestrial objects."

Julian, however, did observe the disordered locks, and the bright eyes which showed traces of having been so lately tearful; but only to admire both, to wonder what might have caused the perturbation, and probably to assign to it some cause much deeper and more touching than the real one.

"I hope you still continue your intention of visiting Glarisford Castle to-day," he said, turning to Effie. "The weather is all that could be wished; and, although there was some frost last night, the sun is warm, and has already melted the crystals from the trees and dried the ground."

"I am afraid I cannot have the pleasure of joining your party this morning," said Effie: "I promised to stay with grandpapa, while Aunt Margaret, who has business in town, went out. She is getting ready to go; and you, Nell, will not be a minute putting on your hat and cloak—only," she continued, glancing at her sister's dishevelled hair, and seeing the look of concern in Julian's countenance, she laughed outright—a merry little laugh—while Ellen, smiling too and blushing rosy red, vanished from the room.

Ten minutes, however, had not passed before she returned,

neat and trim, and ready for the walk, accompanied by Margaret.

"Shall you mind stopping for a few minutes at Mrs. Stevens' house?" asked the latter; "she desired me to call, as she had some commissions for me to execute in Glarisford."

"Not the least," replied Julian, "except that Mr. Ward is there. He walked in with me, and may expect me to walk back with him, to which I should greatly object."

"Perhaps he might like to go with us to the Castle."

"Well, if you wish; but I do not think he would like to walk so far."

Miss Grant and Samuel Ward were sitting together on the sofa in Dr. Grant's parlour, engaged in earnest conversation. Kitty could never feel quite "easy" about her "affairs" and the Dragon Company; and was anxious to avail herself of every opportunity of asking Mr. Ward's advice.

Mrs. Stevens was walking about the room in an evident state of fidget, which the entrance of the visitors, although it did not much alleviate, turned in another direction.

"I received your message," said Margaret, "and have come to ask you what you wish me to do for you in town."

"Art thou going to town again?" asked Mrs. Stevens, in a tone which made it seem as if "going to town" were a reprehensible act. "I do believe thou goes to town every day. When I was young and had a house to attend to, I know I would not have had time for such things. I saw you passing yesterday, and I thought you might have called to see me."

"But we have called to-day, Mrs. Stevens."

"Thou could scarcely avoid coming, when I sent word that I wanted to speak to thee."

"Is it the wools for the Affghan blanket which you wish me to get? I think you said that you wanted blue and red."

"I want at least four colours: and am obliged to sit here doing nothing. It was very strange of thee not to call yesterday."

"I did not know," said Margaret. "But will you, if you please, give me patterns of all the colours you require; I might otherwise make some mistake. And Aunt Kitty," she continued, turning to Miss Grant, "did not you say that you wished me to take your crape handkerchief to the dyer's?"

"Oh yes, dear, if thou please; I have it ready for thee

here ; and wilt thou say that I would be obliged to him to dye it a neat chocolate brown."

"A neat chocolate brown !" repeated Samuel Ward ; "dear me, that reminds me quite of a suit I had when I was a young man. I got it by mistake, and my dear mother did not altogether like it—thought the colour a little gay ; but it was uncommonly neat, uncommonly so."

"Thou wert always too much given to dress," said Mrs. Stevens, as she laid her basket of wools on the sofa.

"Now, dost thou think so," said Mr. Ward, casting a mild glance over his irreproachable garments, and with the sleeve of the right arm softly rubbing a small white speck from the left. "Dear, dear ! How long ago it seems since I had that chocolate suit. I was quite a young man at the time."

"We are all growing old, and ought to remember it," said Mrs. Stevens, without raising her head from the large basket over which she was stooping."

"Yes, yes ; but I feel almost as young as ever, sometimes. Now, really, I may say, almost as young as ever. This fine frosty weather is so bracing."

There was a sound of disapprobation, although no articulate voice, from the basket of wool.

"And I was just thinking this very morning," said Kitty, in her small, subdued voice, "I was just thinking the very same thing. When I go out to walk on a fine frosty morning, I quite forget how old I am."

"Thou wert fifty-six last twelfth month," said Mrs. Stevens, now raising her head from the basket, and looking sternly at her sister.

Kitty sank into silence.

"Then I am thy senior by several years, Cousin Kitty," said Samuel Ward. "Now what wouldst thou think of walking out with me to the Abbey. I think, if I recollect rightly, sister Charlotte bid me ask thee to spend this day with her."

"Kitty can do nothing of the kind," said Mrs. Stevens. "I am far from well, and not fit to be left by myself. Even John is not to be home till late to-night. I have not seen him to-day ; and, though he knew I had a cold hanging about me, and wanted to speak to him, he must go to breakfast with those titled people at the Castle."

"If I staid with you to-day," said Margaret, "could not Aunt Kitty go to the Abbey?"

Mrs. Stevens looked sharply at Margaret, as if she thought her an accomplice in some hidden scheme.

"And how wilt thou get me the wool then?" she asked.

Miss Grey, feeling that she had not considered all the difficulties of the case, was silent.

"Kitty may go to town, and get the wool if she wants a walk," said Mrs. Stevens, who was gratified by the idea of Margaret's spending the day with her; but from the constant habit into which she had fallen of thwarting all her sister's little projects, she could not at once consent to what was proposed; and besides, she had a hazy idea that it would not be proper for Kitty, whom she still considered young—except at such times as it was desirable to discourage her by mentioning her age—to walk out to Holybrook with Samuel Ward alone. She had always thought it her duty to nip in the bud anything which might have a tendency towards matrimony for her sister; and had been more than once successful.

Samuel and Kitty's respective ages of sixty and fifty-six were not sufficient to make Mrs. Stevens's mind easy on the subject; nor yet the fact that neither of them had ever felt, or shown more than cousinly affection for each other.

She had been quite "put out," to use one of her favourite expressions, by their long confidential talk on the sofa; and then when they began to tell of their youthful feelings, and a long walk into the country was proposed, it was too much. It was, however, at last arranged that Margaret should remain with Mrs. Stevens, Mr. Ward walk home alone, and that Kitty, when she had executed the commissions, and chaperoned the young people to Glarisford Castle, should return with Julian, and spend the remainder of the day at Holybrook Abbey.

The wool for Mrs. Stevens having been purchased with fear and trembling, lest it might not be the very shade, was sent out at once by a messenger, and the crape handkerchief was left at the dyer's, with directions for it to be made a neat chocolate brown, not without secret misgivings as to whether there might not be some hidden objections to that colour.



Then Miss Grant, Ellen and Julian, crossed the square, and entered the Castle gates.

Ascending the steep avenue beneath the old elms, whose spreading branches almost met high overhead, the little party soon found themselves before the new front of the Castle, the towers and windows of which overlooked the town of Glarisford, and frowned at the high-shouldered Cathedral which stood on another eminence at no great distance.

"I think it might be best not to remain just here," said Kitty, looking up nervously at the array of great windows, and then at the huge Pyrenean dog which stood near the entrance door. "The family are at home, and it's the new front they live in principally: and the dog thou knows. Besides, it's so much prettier on the other side."

"The flag is not flying," said Julian, looking up at the bare flag-staff. "All the family, the elder members of it at least, have gone to-day to their Lodge, near Killarney; and as for Don, you see he is looking quite amicable. However, I agree with you that this is the least interesting side of the building. Let us go this way to the right. For my part I much prefer the older portions of the building, and you will wish to see the gardens and conservatories, which are generally very full of bloom."

Having walked through greenhouses, hothouses and terraces, gay with spring flowers—for autumn was not the only season patronised by the Marquis—visited the far renowned stables, where the beautiful horses fared sumptuously, surrounded by all the elegancies and conveniences of modern horse life, and seen the old Chapel, with its quaint oak carvings, and the great Hall in which it is said that Richard II. was once feasted with the splendour which he loved so well, they reached at last the western and oldest side of the Castle, a part of which was built in the reign of Henry III., while some portions, now almost in ruins, dated from a still earlier period.

The terrace on this side was narrow, and the ivy-covered battlements were in many places broken, and falling to decay, but the fairest of landscapes lay beneath. From this point little of the town was visible, the Glaris, sweeping round the base of the steep eminence on which the Castle was built,

glistened brightly in the sunshine; to the north rose the picturesque mountains, the thin semi-transparent haze which hung around them seeming to add to their height, while it softened their rugged outlines, and away to the westward for many a mile stretched in rich plains and gently undulating hills, the wide pasture lands which promise to be one of Ireland's chief sources of revenue.

"It is ten long years since I was here," said Ellen, "and I can see very little change except that the ivy has grown, and the view looks more beautiful than ever. Or perhaps I did not observe the view at all—I was not nine at the time."

"Few children appreciate fine scenery," said Julian. "I know that, although I had been here very frequently before, it was not until one autumn day, seven or eight years ago, when I chanced to walk alone round these battlements, that I was struck by its exceeding beauty. If you are not afraid of a little climbing, I think the scenery appears almost more picturesque from the bank below the battlements; the tops of the elm trees hide some of those old houses to the right, and make a frame for the beautiful picture."

"I am thought to be almost too fond of climbing," said Ellen, with a bright smile.

"Ah, I remember, Julius took you a wild walk once, but this will be a very slight trial of your powers, compared to the adventure of the Dead Man's Cave."

"Ah, Julian dear, don't take Ellen into perilous places!" said Miss Grant, pathetically.

"Not for the world, Aunt Kitty; but do not suppose that I shall leave you behind; there is really no danger, and I know you would enjoy the beauty of the place as much as anyone. The way is down through this breach made by Cromwell's guns two hundred years ago, and which the proprietors have had the good taste to allow that old yew tree and the clinging ivy alone to repair."

"My dear child," said Miss Grant, looking down the little winding path to which Julian led the way, "I really could not attempt that; thou and Ellen must go alone."

"No, indeed, Aunt Kitty, we cannot go without you. Give me your hand, and you shall be as safe as if on your own

staircase. I shall come back to assist you in a few moments, Miss Walker."

"No, no, thank you," said Ellen. "I can follow Aunt Kitty."

"But don't fall on me, my dear. Oh, Julian, I don't like to lean on thee, thou art so slender. Now if thou wert only John."

"Yes, if I were only John. But indeed, although I am not John, there is no danger. Lean on me as much as you like; I am stronger than you suppose."

"Oh my!" said Aunt Kitty, as, still holding the young man's hand, she rested on the grassy platform below the ivied walls. "I never thought to be here, I am sure—such a height above, and such a depth below! Doesn't it make thy head light, Ellen? We are looking down on to the tops of the trees, and it seems almost as if we might fall into the river, the bank is so steep below."

"But is not the view glorious?" said Julian. "This Castle was one of the strongholds of the kings of Leinster, and it, with all those fair lands which we see spread before us, the first Baron, who was a follower of the Earl of Pembroke, received by his marriage with the daughter of King Dermot. There to the right you see is Strongbow's Tower; whether it were built by that chief, or by his follower, tradition saith not, but it certainly dates from the thirteenth century. The wall beyond is still older, for this hill appears to have been used as a fortress since the very earliest times. Give me your hand again, Aunt Kitty, a little more rough walking will take us to Strongbow's Tower, and under it I know there is a sunny nook where we can sit and rest."

"Dear! the height frightens me a little."

"Do come, dear Aunt Kitty," said Ellen, pleadingly. "I have so longed to visit Strongbow's Tower. My grandfather spent a night there during the rebellion of '98."

"Ah, I forgot that. I should like to see it too. Give me thy hand again, Julian. Indeed I see the way to it is tolerably smooth."

The dark time-worn edifice stood at the furthest extremity of the battlements, its thick heavy walls, and narrow loopholes, showing that it had been built at a time when pillage

and rapine were of every-day occurrence, and defence against surrounding enemies the first object in the erection of a dwelling-place. At the foot of the Tower the sward was green and dry; and early violets were peeping out from amongst the short thick grass.

"Well, indeed, I'm not sorry I came," said Kitty Grant. "Isn't it sweet here, Ellen?"

"The violets are very sweet, and the view very beautiful," replied Ellen; "but what a strange place for anyone to think of building! It must at least have been a position of great safety, for they should have been valiant foes indeed who could climb these steep embankments in the face of determined defenders."

"And yet," said Julian, "the Castle has been taken and retaken many times. These battlements and towers which face the river were besieged by the Parliamentary army in 1650; you can still see in several places, besides that opening through which we climbed down, traces of Cromwell's artillery, which was planted on the opposite side of the river, and there is still a cannon-ball embedded somewhere near the foundations of this Tower: I have seen it when I was a boy, but ivy and brambles seem quite to have overgrown the place now. If you have any curiosity to see it, perhaps I could find it still."

"No, do not mind, the brambles grow too thickly there; you cannot find the place without having your hands all torn with the thorns."

Miss Grant had seated herself on the soft grass. "Let us rest here for a while in the sunshine," she said. "It makes me feel so happy just to look down on the river, and the country, and to hear the birds singing so sweetly above and below us."

"I am glad you like the place," said Julian. "It has been always one of my favourite haunts. I have often sat here for hours thinking of the olden times; and conjuring up strange visions of past ages, when war, notwithstanding all its horrors, woke up in men's hearts those sentiments of heroism and chivalry which in peaceful times too often slumber."

"Ah yes," said Kitty, "one likes to read of them; still

they were dreadful times, and peace is much better; and besides, I expect the Castle, and all about here are far finer than they ever were before."

"No doubt," said Julian. "Only fancy how the river would appear, when, instead of those large vessels lying at the quays, and the busy steamers which pass and repass, only the rough boats of the Irish, and the not much more civilised craft of their invaders, floated on its waters; when, instead of the town with its smoke and its long rows of streets, its steeples, and its chimneys, a few rude huts alone, clustered for protection around this fortress; and skirmish, sally, and attack were things of every-day occurrence. Well, they were fierce and savage times after all, 'ere the Emerald gem of the western world was set in the crown of a stranger.'"

"Ah, Julian dear," said Miss Grant, "I hope thou dost not call our good Queen a stranger. I think she's an excellent woman. I saw her in Dublin in '49, and really she looked most agreeable."

"And I am one of the most loyal of her subjects, Aunt Kitty. I have no wish whatever to take the Emerald gem from its present setting, and I quite agree with you that peace is better than war, notwithstanding its romance and heroism."

"The wars of the Commonwealth always seemed to me filled with the stern horrors of warfare without any of its romance," said Ellen.

"Forgive me, if I think you are somewhat mistaken in that idea," said Julian, as he seated himself on the grass, and applied himself to plucking the early violets, which were springing up everywhere in this sunny nook. "Later historians have shown us that there was much of noble heroism amongst those iron warriors, particularly in Cromwell himself; you must read what Carlyle says of him."

"Carlyle is too deep for my shallow wit," said Ellen, smiling, as she picked up a few blades of couch grass from beneath the wall to tie around her violets.

"Will you not tie these along with them?" said Julian, giving her the bunch which he had gathered.

"Thanks," said Ellen, as taking the offered flowers, she

tyed them with her own ; and Miss Grant said, looking at the pretty purple and white bunch,

"Those wouldn't have grown here, thou knows, if all the earth had been torn up by the military."

"Certainly not," said Julian, "and I am sure you think these fresh sweet tokens of returning spring better worth seeing than Cromwell's cannon-ball, or any other memento of ancient warfare."

"I don't know, indeed," said Kitty ; "I'm sometimes afraid I'm too fond of such things. Sister Sarah thinks so, I know. But it's old ballads about war and chivalry, my dears, that please me most, and I'm afraid they're not improving."

"You know 'O'Connor's Child'?"

"Ah dear, don't I well!" said Miss Grant, whilst some old recollection made her eyes dim. "I remember when that poem was quite new. Yes, I remember it very well. I suppose thou hast read it, Ellen?"

"Oh yes ; it is beautiful, with a wild and peculiar beauty of its own."

"Do you know," said Julian, smiling, "that, building fancy upon fancy, it has always seemed to me that it was in this lofty fortress the lovely lady dwelt,

'When in the palace of her sires,  
She bloomed a peerless flower,'

and that when, for her lover's sake, she forsook all her regal splendours, that it was across those westward plains,

'She pursued by moonless skies,  
The light of Connocht Moran's eyes.'"

"Thou knows it all by heart, I am sure, Julian. I believe thou remembers all the poetry thou ever read. Couldst not thou repeat it for us?"

"Oh yes, with pleasure. If you do not object?" said the young man, turning to Ellen.

"I object! oh no," she replied, with a bright look, which said more than her words. "I had been thinking that as soon as I returned home, I should read the poem, and it is much better to listen to it here."

Whilst Julian repeated the beautiful and pathetic ballad,

Miss Grant's eyes filled with tears, which one by one flowed down her withered cheeks, for the words called up visions of happy early days, now flown away for ever.

Whether it were sympathy with her old friend, the deep pathos of Julian's well modulated voice, or the reality which the place and scene seemed to impart to the touching story, the effect which it produced on Ellen's mind was, although different, nearly as deep. Happy, in the first bloom of womanhood, she had as yet no sorrows of her own, no recollection of any brighter time than the present, and no sad memories of the past to recall. But being highly impressible and imaginative, her mind was so carried away to the bygone days of Erin's pride, and so touched by the sorrows of the royal lady, that as she listened, unconsciously to herself, tears gathered in her eyes, and a tenderer beauty stole over her lovely face. Looking up, Julian observed the expression of her countenance, and a look of earnest pleasure brightened his own; while he still almost mechanically repeated the words, a thousand happy thoughts crowded through his brain. Was this lovely creature one who could thus sympathise with him in his poetic visions, and in the bright fancies which softened and gilded for him so many of life's rugged outlines! If it were so—if—what might not life become to him?

As he ended, Ellen woke from her day-dream, and her eyes returned from the far-off gaze which had seemed to look into distant times, as well as over the western plains of her native country.

She blushed when she saw that Julian had observed her reverie, and smiling, she said simply, "I had almost fancied that I was myself 'O'Connor's Child.'"

The young man was very near telling the "sweet lady" at his side how truly she was fitted to inspire "Green Erin's hearts with beauty's power," but he did not—he only picked a blade of grass at his feet, and said, "The true poet possesses a wonderful power over the human mind."

"Wonderful!" repeated Aunt Kitty, as she put her handkerchief to her eyes. "Dear me! how I do enjoy a bit of poetry; though some verses make me feel sad enough too. Sarah never likes poetry, and I suppose she's right. But Julian, I know thou hast a deal of poetry, and it's quite a

treat to hear it. Do say a little more for us, if it does not tire thee."

Julian looked to Ellen to know her wishes.

"Do if you please," she said; and thus encouraged, he repeated lay after lay of "high romaunt and ancient chivalry," whilst the ladies listened, all three seated there on the soft sunny sward beneath the ivied towers; and not until the sun had left the south, and his lowering rays were slanting across the western plains, did they think of returning to their homes. Miss Grant, as had been before arranged, went out with Julian Jefferson to dine and spend the night at Holybrook Abbey; and Mrs. Jefferson was kept up to an unwonted hour talking about old times, and listening to Kitty's memories of former days, of which it must be admitted she not unfrequently lost the thread, recovering herself after each nod with a calm smile on her large placid countenance. She wished Cousin Kitty to talk just as long as she liked, and would have been glad to listen and be interested, if she possibly could have done so, but it was not far from midnight, and she had so frequently heard the very same recollections.

Ellen, whom Miss Grant and Julian escorted safely to her grandfather's door, spent most of that evening seated on the hearthrug at the old man's side, listening to the legends connected with Glarisford Castle, which he knew so well; not forgetting his own adventures, and the history of the night which he had spent in Strongbow's Tower.

As for Julian, he was not seen much after he had dined. He went to his own studio, a large, wild-looking room, near the top of the house, where were kept most of the scientific instruments which had belonged to his father; telescopes, microscopes, maps, globes, old books and old papers, besides his own writing materials, the books which he most frequently required, two or three half-finished paintings, an easel, paints, brushes, jars of oil and varnish, &c., &c.

A most littered and untidy chamber it was; but Julian spent many a happy hour there; and, both from old and later associations, preferred it to almost any other apartment in the house.

We shall not intrude into his studio on this March evening,



farther than to say, that whether it were poetry or the sister muse which he invoked, that day spent at Glarisford Castle was not left without a memorial.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

MARGARET GREY's day was not spent so agreeably : Mrs. Stevens was querulous and out of humour, found fault with Margaret, and all her friends and acquaintances, until the messenger bringing out the wools, enabled her to proceed with her Afghan blanket, when the tone of her mind took a brighter hue. She began to knit, and to look forward with pleasure to the nice little dinner which Kitty had left ready for her and Margaret ; when, just as it was about to be dished, Dr. Grant came home unexpectedly.

" Well, to be sure ! " she exclaimed, as he entered, " what does bring thee home so early to-day ? I thought as thou breakfasted with the Marquis, thou'd hardly think us worth dining with ; and I'm not at all sure that there's any dinner for thee."

The Doctor was looking particularly cheery ; and, nothing damped by this reception, his face brightened still more when he saw Margaret.

" I suppose there are potatoes enough," he said, as he held his hands to the fire.

" Yes, there are potatoes and there is cold meat ; but the little dish of sweetbreads, which Kitty left, is barely enough for Margaret and me."

" Well, Aunt, I hope that you and Miss Grey will act as if I were not present. I shall not even look at the sweetbreads, I assure you. I am so hungry, that cold mutton will taste as well as the best, and I shall enjoy it all the more for knowing that you, who have not the advantage of my hearty appetite, have at least the dainty fare. I would not have come home, but that I really could not avoid it : I had so many letters to write."

Mrs. Stevens was, in reality, quite pleased by her nephew's return. She felt as much affection for him as she was capable of feeling for any one but herself. She whispered to Mar-

garet—not being able to resist finding some fault with the absent Kitty—"I'm glad to have John to myself, even for an hour."

After dinner, Dr. Grant went to his own room; and Mrs. Stevens, sitting by the fire, related, as she was able to do both well and pleasantly, stories of her youth and interesting anecdotes of former times, until the hour came for her to retire to her chamber to take her usual evening nap.

"Dear me," she said to Dr. Grant, whom she met at the head of the stairs, hat in hand, "art thou going out again?"

"Yes; Dan is bringing the gig round."

"Well, really, I think thou might have staid with us this one evening, when thou knows Kitty is away."

"But surely Miss Grey will take good care of you."

"Excuses always. Well, if thou art bent on leaving me, go and tell Margaret that I shall be down in half-an-hour. I really must have an early cup of tea."

Margaret was sitting by the fire, which John Grant stirred as he delivered his aunt's message. "I have been writing ever since," he continued, "and my hands feel cold."

"How tired you must be; and have you to go out again?"

"Yes, I fear I must, although I should be very glad to stay." He paused, and looked into the fire. "My letters were very interesting this evening; perhaps that was the reason I did not find writing them at all tiresome, though heaven knows I am no scribe. I have not yet told either of my aunts of my good fortune," he said, after another pause; "but may I tell you?"

"I am always glad to hear of any good fortune for my friends."

"Thank you. I know you have always been my friend; and perhaps I value your friendship more than anything in the world, though after all——. Well, I was going to tell you of two fortunate circumstances which have nappened to me to-day. The Marquis sent for me to the Castle this morning, his business with me being to ask me if I were willing to take the office of his family physician, which Dr. Townley has been obliged, on account of his age and infirmity, to relinquish; and, secondly, to say he would give all his interest and support to place me in the Glarisford Dispensary. Neither offices

are in themselves very remunerative, but together, they imply all the best practice, both in the town and neighbourhood, which a man of my age can reasonably expect."

"I am indeed very much pleased," said Margaret. "Your life heretofore has been toilsome, and your practice unremunerative."

Dr. Grant stirred the fire again. "No," he said, "I can scarcely say my life has been toilsome. I love my profession, and I feel that whatever toil or hardship it incurs, are useful both to mind and body: '*Laborare est orare*.'"

"Yes, that will be true as long as the world lasts; to be really happy we must employ our faculties well and fully. But there is, you know, such a thing as overwork."

"I have not been overworked," replied the Doctor, "although I have worked long and for very little. But the work itself, Miss Grey, has been a great boon to me, even though the recompense was small. Besides fully occupying my mind, it has increased my experience. I am naturally ambitious, and I hope I may get on in the world and in my profession; in fact, things have now taken such a turn as nearly to ensure for me, if health be spared, a much more fortunate future. Even before this, my practice was becoming more lucrative."

"How delighted dear Aunt Kitty will be; and Mrs. Stevens, too, in her own way."

"I have not yet told either; nor would I have ventured to come here to tell you this evening, but that my aunt sent me with her message. I was a very poor man, Miss Grey, when you knew me first—that moonlight night when you and your brother came to our little house at Arranmore."

"That is ten years ago," said Margaret; "how time flies!"

"Yes, ten long years. I was very poor then, and not much richer when, five years after, I was presumptuous enough to tell you how much I loved you, and to ask you to share my poverty."

Margaret looked much distressed. "You know," she replied, "I am sure you know, that poverty or riches had no weight, or could have had none, in influencing my feelings. It would not have been right, and it could have brought no happiness to you, for me to have answered you otherwise. You

knew that I could not give you the affection you asked, and of which you were worthy."

"You could not five years ago ; but now ?"

"Dr. Grant," said Margaret, while tears gathered in her eyes, "it distresses me, more than I can tell you, to be the cause of any pain to you, who were"—her lip quivered—"who were so much beloved, so true and devoted a friend to Theodore and to us all. You have—you always will have—my sincerest gratitude, esteem, and regard."

"Then five more long years, during which my affections never wavered, have made no difference ? Well, Margaret, at least, you cannot make me cease to love you. Good-bye, I have a drive of ten miles before me, and so many patients to visit, that I probably shall not be home to-night. '*Laborare est orare.*' It is a great blessing to a man to have plenty of people to think of besides himself."

As he turned to go, Margaret rose quickly, and extending her hand, said, "God bless you, my dear friend ; and may He give us grace to walk rightly in our allotted paths, however lonely they may be." Her voice faltered, and, seating herself again on the sofa, she buried her face in the cushion, and burst into tears.

John Grant stood for a few moments beside her ; then, without speaking, he left the room, and seating himself in his gig, which stood waiting at the door, drove away.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

A LARGE addition had lately been built to Holybrook Mills, and there was one room more than a hundred feet in length, into which machinery had not yet been put. Its ceiling was lofty, and its floor, strong, level, and elastic. It was the very room in which to have a general dance and merry-making, where all classes might celebrate a wedding. But Fanny Grey said, decidedly, that there should be no such folly at her marriage. Mr. Tatlow, also acquiescing in his bride's views, thought it would be better not ; and so Wilfred Grey and his wife gave up the project, although they were anxious to have some entertainment for their workpeople.

moustache. "he may lecture on 'The Rights of Man,' or 'Cruelty to Animals;' I think it does not much matter which; in either case I shall have the lecture printed, with a dedication to Mr. and Mrs. Tallow."

"He does not lecture on 'The Rights of Man,' replied Samuel Warr, seriously; "and I think it is so best, for it might seem to have a seditious tendency; but there are——" and the old man, raising his hand, counted the subjects on his fingers: "Phonography, Anti-Slavery, Temperance, British India, with diagrams, Electricity, with experiments, and many more."

"Well, whichever you think is best."

"His lecture on 'The Horrors of War' is very striking too," said Samuel Warr, thoughtfully; "and, indeed, my dear Julius, I should be glad to think that thou felt a little seriously on that subject, thyself; and now especially when I am told that thy regiment is going out to India. I do feel both for thee and for my sister Charlotte too, in parting with thee in so trying a way. Now, dost thou not think thou might reconsider the matter, and give up thy appointment?"

"Who can tell what the lecture may do in changing my views. I am pretty sure, at least, that it will make it harder to me to leave Ireland."

"Now, dost thou say so! I shall certainly try to do my part. As to Professor Thomas, I have no doubt that I shall be able to secure him; for, poor man, he is generally quite free from engagements; but the time seems short for giving a general notice. What would'st thou think of deferring it for a few days?"

"It must be now or never," said Julius, with a sigh. "No one knows how soon a summons may come for me."

"Yes, yes, to be sure, yes. Now, would'st thou like me to have a little notice printed? It might bring a larger audience."

"No, I think it would be unnecessary; and, after all, you know our room is not so very large. If all our particular friends and acquaintances come, it will be sufficient."

"And perhaps the subject may be more really improving to the upper classes. Would'st thou wish me to invite some of thy brother officers?"

"Oh, certainly; they are greatly in want of improvement.

Tell them to bring all their friends, that the lecture is likely to be both stirring and instructive, and that Captain Jefferson is to take the chair at nine o'clock precisely."

"Well, now, I do like to see thee so inclined to make thyself useful; and I shall endeavour to do my part in the matter. I think I may venture to call at the residences of the upper classes in the neighbourhood of Glarisford, as well as in the town itself, and request them to come. And now dost thou think it would be out of place for me to ask the women of the families to accompany their husbands and brothers?"

"It would be quite your place to beg them to come," said Julius, stroking the dark moustache more industriously than ever. "The lecture would be a very one-sided affair indeed, if there were only men at it."

"Well, I shall try to do my part, but I fear thou wilt have a busy time preparing. Farewell for the present," and the old man left the room, saying as he went, "It does appear quite an opening for forwarding a good cause."

"What is the cause, Julius?" asked Mrs. Grey, who, entering at the same time that Samuel Ward quitted the room, had caught his parting words. "What is the cause, Julius?"

"Upon my word, Julia, I don't exactly remember which cause we decided on."

"For what?"

"For the lecture, to be sure. You have no idea how sensible I have become since you were last here. I quite agree in Uncle Samuel's views, and have commissioned him to invite the Professor."

"And shall we have to sit in that great room listening to a lecture?"

"Oh you will find it so instructive that you will forget everything else. What quantity of provisions have you in the house for this approaching wedding?"

"A great deal too much. I don't know what Wilfred was thinking of when he ordered such a quantity: besides all that Fanny *would* have made in the house. We have spiced meats, pies, pasties, cakes, dried fruits, and wine enough to give a wedding breakfast to ten times the number who are to be here; and as for the wedding-cake, it is enormous."

"Well, Julia, if our worthy uncle were here, I think he

would tell you that some 'way might open' for disposing of the overplus."

"Why? Do you mean to give the people who come to the lecture refreshments? But, Julius, I hope you are not going back to Kerry?"

"No, I think not; I intend to make myself generally useful."

"That's a good boy," said the elder sister, kissing the tall, bearded man, whom she still looked on as one of the children of the family, and then hurrying away to attend to further housekeeping arrangements; for these were very busy days, and during all the time which intervened between this and the wedding, both Mrs. Grey and the bride-elect were so fully occupied with their own affairs, that they had not time to observe that Captain Jefferson—and indeed several other members of the family party—were busily employed in arranging and decorating the new loft. Who could call it a "loft" when, late on Tuesday evening, its adornments were all but completed, the rafters hung with evergreens, and unsightly corners and rough wood-work banked up with shrubs and flowering plants from the conservatories at the Abbey, so that altogether the apartment presented quite a gala appearance.

Across the centre of the room stood three or four stout wooden supports: these were closely covered with shining laurel leaves, and from one green pillar to another, Effie and Ellen Walker hung festoons of trailing ivy, amongst the dark green leaves of which were to be twined bunches of primroses, daffodils, and other gay spring flowers; but this of course must not be done too soon—it would be time enough after the departure of the bride and bridegroom.

Samuel Ward was most successful in all that he had undertaken. Mr. Thomas had, of course, no other engagement, and would have the greatest pleasure in delivering a lecture at Holybrook Mills.

Leaving the Professor's lodgings, the old man walked across the Square, and, near the Castle gate, met the Marquis of Glarisford, accompanied by one or two of the officers who were stationed in the town. With the undaunted front of a man who felt he was doing his duty, the Quaker accosted the nobleman and requested his attendance at the lecture. "The

nobility can do much in giving their countenance to these things," he added, after he had explained the nature and object of the meeting. "My young friend, Julius Jefferson, desired me to say to all that he intended to take the chair at nine o'clock; but if thou Marquis would'st kindly come, I am sure he would gladly relinquish that post to thee."

Lord Glarisford seemed at first a little puzzled, but he said, with a pleasant smile, "I shall be most happy to do what I can for you, Mr. Ward, and for Captain Jefferson. Tell him, if you please, that he may rely upon my being at Holybrook at the appointed time."

Samuel Ward then went on his way; and neither heard the merry words nor saw the merry looks which passed amongst the young men whom he had left.

He called at the Barracks, and at many gentlemen's houses both in and near the town; and to those at which he could not call, he sent messages. Never was a man more anxious to do his part. Everywhere he was received with the greatest kindness and consideration; everywhere it seemed to be known—even before his arrival—that the Marquis was to be a guest at Holybrook Mills, and none refused the invitation.

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## CHAPTER XV.

The marriage of Fanny Grey and the Rev. Paul Tatlow was celebrated at Holybrook Church on the 3rd of April.

The bridegroom looked happy and nervous; the bride, handsome and composed; the bridesmaids, lovely—Ellen being unquestionably beautiful, and Effie possessing a charm of sweet, unassuming grace, which was as prepossessing as beauty.

Before half-past eleven the ceremony was completed; the carriages had driven away; and of all the wedding company, Dr. Grant alone remained behind.

He had heard that Christie Ryan was worse; and, although Nance had not sent for him, he determined on paying the poor man a visit, there being time enough to walk round by Iveagh before the wedding breakfast.

A place had been offered to him in the carriage with Mr.



Grey, Margaret, and Effie, and he would like to have accepted it, if duty had not stood in the way.

The morning was bright and fine, and a wedding is always expected to be a joyful occasion ; but somehow, the Doctor had seldom in his life felt or looked more melancholy—and melancholy did not suit his face, which nature had made for cheerfulness—than now, as standing at the church door, he buttoned closely round him the great coat (which he would not have required had he taken the vacant seat in the carriage), and replaced his light kid gloves by a stouter and warmer pair. The day, although bright, was cold enough, and a sharp east wind blew across the mountains, making the warm coat and gloves an absolute necessity to any person coming out of the well-warmed little church.

"A wedding's a pretty sight, Doctor," said Mr. Maunders, who, somewhat out of breath, returned up the short avenue leading to the gate, whence he had been watching the departure of the carriages. "An uncommon pretty sight ; and Miss Fanny, though she'll never see thirty again, looks as well and handsome as ever she did. And as to the bridesmaids, they're near about right ; but someway or another, there's nothing in the world makes me feel as down in the mouth as a marriage. I don't know whether it's thinking of poor Jane I do be ; but for the pleasure of the thing, I declare't I'd far an' away rather go to a buryin' ; and I doubt, by the look of you, you feel somethin' similar like, Doctor. But you shouldn't : you've got the world before you, and we'll be having a wedding of your own some day. That won't be the same thing at all, please goodness."

Dr. Grant shook his head. "Not I, Maunders," he said ; and he walked down the gravelled pathway which led among the graves, Maunders keeping up with him, although with difficulty.

"Don't say that, Doctor. Sure you're just in the prime of life, and at the height of your performance. Don't you lose heart that way. Sure if a thing can't be, it can't be ; and a body has jest to leave it alone. Though I must say," continued the large man, with real sympathy in his voice, "that it made even my ould turnip of a heart bleed to see the sad look in Miss Margaret's eyes, and her face as pale as an

alabaster, at her sister's wedding, and to think of all was in her mind. Though very like through all she's not unhappy : I won't say as to that. But if you'd only put that all clear and clean out of your mind, and begin to look about ye again ; and where on the face of this livin' 'arth would you see such a pair as the two Miss Walkers ? I don't recommend Miss Ellen, for my name's not Maunders if both the Captain and Mr. Julian aint in love with her already ; but Miss Effie, sir, she's a girl to make a man happy if ever there was one."

"No doubt, no doubt," said Dr. Grant, as he leaped over the stile, and, taking the little path across the fields, turned his steps towards the more mountainous district.

As he passed the pretty Parsonage, which was at some distance from the church, he saw Miss Grant standing on the door step. Mrs. Stevens had, although very unwillingly, allowed her sister to spend that day at Holybrook Mills, partake of the wedding breakfast, and attend the Professor's lecture in the evening, but on no account to be present at the ceremony in the church.

Kitty had, however, come out early, and, by Mrs. Jefferson's desire, spent the morning at the Parsonage, where there were still two or three things to be done, and two or three stitches to be "put in" up and down the house, which now required only a few finishing touches to make it ready for the reception of the bride and bridegroom, whose wedding trip was to be short, only occupying two or three days. Fanny did not care for travelling. Her great pleasure in life was "management," and her principal object in marrying Mr. Tatlow was that she might have the full control of a house, and perhaps of the "man of the house" also.

John Grant would gladly have passed by the Parsonage unnoticed, but he was too near now for this to be possible. Aunt Kitty was calling him both by word and gesture, so with as good a grace as he could command, he entered the gate and crossed the neatly-gravelled court before the house.

"Come in, John, my dear," said Miss Grant, "I'm so glad I saw thee passing. It's quite a feast to the eyes to look at the house ; Cousin Charlotte has managed everything so elegantly ; it's all as neat as hands and pins could make it."

"Im sure it's very nice, Aunt ; but I have no time to spare."

"No ; but see the beautiful polish on the furniture ; and the sweet little patterns on the carpet ; and the pretty little ornaments on the table—Fanny's wedding presents most of them. And do, John dear, look into the china-closet : two sets of breakfast and two sets of tea, quite new, besides all the rest."

"Charming ! charming ! but I must go."

"Ah, do come upstairs, it would be such a treat to thee ; Cousin Charlotte's upstairs : she dropped in on the way from performing the ceremony thou knows."

"I'll take your's and Mrs. Jefferson's word for everything being as it should be."

"But there's the little plate-chest thou ought to see ; and the set of fruit knives that Cousin Samuel gave them ; and the tea service, all pure silver, from the two young men ; but don't say a word about them."

"Not a word, if you let me go."

"But I hear Cousin Charlotte coming down," said Kitty, as a heavy step was heard descending the stairs ; but her nephew had escaped, and was half way across the gravelled court as she called after him, "Don't overheat thyself, my dear, and button thy coat close up to thy chin."

It was just as well that Dr. Grant had not much time to spare, for the quick walk in the mountain air did him all the good in the world, and before he reached Christie Ryan's cottage, he had greatly thrown off the gloomy feelings which had oppressed him.

Poor Christie was as usual stretched on the dirty pallet bed, but looking so much more ghastly than heretofore, that at the first glance Dr. Grant thought his end must be fast approaching.

"Christie's nearly through," said Nance, looking at him almost defiantly, "he can't speak a word to-day. I've sent for his Riverence, and he'll be all fixed in no time."

"Are you in great pain, Christie ?" said the Doctor, laying his hand on the forehead of the dying man.

The only reply was a groan.

"Didn't I tell ye he was past speakin'," said Nance, fiercely. "Give him a sleepy dose, can't ye ? it w'd do him more good nor anything else. Or mabbe you'd recommend

him change of air down to Pether's little pigstye, that the Captain's going to pull down about his ears ;" and Nance, muttering a curse, turned for a moment from the watch which she had kept over her husband.

Dr. Grant had been feeling the sick man's pulse, reckoning its throbs, which, although quick and excited, were not so feeble as they had often been. The moment Nance turned away, Christie looked up with a sudden, wild light in his eyes, and, gasping for breath, was about to speak, but the woman, catching the sound, turned quickly, and with a groan, the poor invalid sank again upon his wretched pillow, whilst beads of moisture gathered on his brow.

"He's clean out of his wits. Didn't I tell ye he wanted a sleepy dose? nothin' else 'll do him no good now. If ye've done feelin' his pult, ye'd best come along, for I'm goin' down the road, an' I must lock the door, for they say there's bad people about the country these times ;" and she smiled grimly whilst she laid her hand on the latch of the half door.

"Give Christie something to eat before you go, and make down the fire. He requires food and comfort more than any draughts which I can give him."

"Food and comfort!" repeated Nance, crossing her red arms upon her breast ; "where do ye think the likes of huz w'd get firing or food, or anything else ; me that can't 'arn a penny for lookin' afther him ; an' him that hasn't 'arnd a half-penny these two year'n more ; an' the only boy that's left to me put out of work ; and me two fine sons taken off to the wars to be shot down like dogs—bad luck to the whole seed, breed, an' generation of them that's done it on us."

"Nance," replied Dr. Grant, "you know as well as I do that it is Peter's own fault if he does not earn an honest livelihood : where he does get what you and he spend at the public-houses, I do not say ; but even suppose you had nothing else, the money which Mr. Grey and Mrs. Jefferson allow you weekly is more than enough for Christie's wants. I tell you I shall not leave this house until you make a good fire and give him something to eat ; or, if you like it better, you may go away on your errand, and leave him to my care for an hour."

With a quick scowl, the woman glanced sharply at Dr.

Grant, then muttering and grumbling, she divested herself of the coarse shawl she had wrapped about her shoulders, and began to rekindle the smouldering embers which lay upon the hearth,—more willing to obey the young man's first command than to leave him alone with her husband. Dr. Grant seated himself quietly beside the bed, until he had seen a bright fire made, then the broth, which Nance—still grumbling—took from a shelf, being warmed, he administered it to Christie with his own hands.

The warm nourishment seemed at once to revive the dying man: he rose up in bed, and a wild, earnest look gleamed over his haggard face; he essayed to speak, but a threatening look from his wife again silenced him. Just then a shadow passed the window. Nance glanced toward it, and in that moment Christie caught John Grant's hand convulsively in one of his own, and while with the other he pointed to the ground, whispered, "Not me, Docther *dear*, not me."

"It's Peg," said Nance, turning, "an', I must be afther her. Are ye goin' to stay here all day, Docther, or ar' ye not?"

Dr. Grant smoothed the pillow under Christie's head, and promising soon to return, left the house, Nance following him, and locking the door carefully as she went out.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

At about four o'clock the bride and bridegroom left Holybrook; and not till then did Captain Jefferson divulge to his astounded sister the full extent of his views for the evening entertainment, nor tell her the number and quality of the guests who had, at Samuel Ward's bidding, promised to attend the lecture, and who would no doubt require to be supplied with suitable refreshments.

"Good heavens, Julius!" exclaimed Mrs. Grey, "what am I to do? The Montgomeries, the Ashtons, the Delacherois——" and she repeated one after another the names of the families invited. "Julius, it is really dreadful; and what will they think of us and of it all?"

"They will probably be much obliged to us for providing

them with a little variety : things are very flat in Glarisford and its neighbourhood just at present. All the visitors have left the Castle, and the Marchioness is not to be back till May. Lord Glarisford is there by himself at present. By the way, he promised to come, too, as well as all the officers at present stationed in Glarisford."

Mrs. Grey sat down in speechless consternation, whilst her brother continued—

"Mr. Jones, the County Inspector, and several of his subs, will be here too; Maunders tells me that Mr. Ward met and invited them yesterday."

"They are worse than the Marquis," said Mrs. Grey, with something like a groan; and, worst of all, you say that the ladies of all these families are to be here as well."

"My dear sister, it was our honoured uncle who invited all the guests. I did not say a word about ladies, I assure you, till he asked me if it would be out of place to invite the women of the various families, and how could I say that it would?"

"Oh, Julius, Julius! you are a sad boy! If I only had time I should be excessively angry with you. And what shall we say to Fanny? It will be a dance after all—a veritable ball. Did you not say that the band of the —th was to be here?"

"Yes, poor fellows; you would not surely deny them the privilege of hearing this lecture on 'The Horrors of War?' And as for myself, I have been turning my sword into a pruning-hook, cutting down laurels and evergreens to adorn the room and advance the cause. Come with me now, and I'll show you a room to which we need not fear to introduce the finest of our guests." So saying, Captain Jefferson, taking his sister's hand, led her out along the short gravelled path to the new addition, which, although not thirty yards from the house, was hidden from it by a thick screen of evergreens and beeches.

So great was the transformation which the new loft had, during the last two or three days undergone, that Mrs. Grey could scarcely believe it to be the same as that which she had two or three times before "just peeped into," not caring to go further into its wildness; but now, with its bright clean floor of new firm boards, its handsomely-decorated walls and pillars,

and with the flowering shrubs, azalias, camellias, and rhododendrons, which adorned this end which, as Julius said, contained the reserved seats, it was a room both handsome and creditable; and, when lighted by the numerous lamps which hung from the walls and ceiling, would look still prettier.

"Well, ma'am," said Mr. Maunders, as wiping his face and forehead in his great, red handkerchief, he approached Mrs. Grey. "Well, ma'am, it's near done now, and I hope all's pleasin' to you."

"Indeed, Richard, I don't know what to say. Have you been assisting in the treason too?"

"Is it me, ma'am? I've been as busy as a bee in a tar barrel from mornin' to night since the Captain started it. The only piece of recreation I took was goin' to see the marriage, ma'am; and it took a deal to pluck up my sperits after that."

"You should have known better than to encourage these foolish young people. For my part, I do not know what we shall do with all the visitors, high and low, who are coming."

"Well indeed, ma'am, as to that, I must say the company will be a little *mizellaneous*. Miss Fanny set her face agin anything of the kind, I know; but at the last, I think the parson allowed that the workers might have a little instruction; and Mr. Grey, he said they should have a fiddle if they liked; and you know a man may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

"There now, is not that convincing?" asked Captain Jefferson.

"I do not know what I shall say to Fanny when she returns, but come what will I must see about the supper." So saying, Mrs. Grey retired to seek sympathy from her husband, but was shocked to find him quite conversant with all the proceedings of the young people.

Margaret was the only one of the family innocent of the treason, and from her she received full sympathy, and also the greatest assistance in the work of preparation which was still before them.

Wilfred Grey and Mr. Maunders had already provided a plentiful supper for the workpeople in a loft adjoining the larger one; but the laying out of that for the other visitors was a much more serious task. Fortunately, there was no

lack in the supply of either eatables or drinkables, or any of the requisites for a very good supper. The dining-room was large, and there were plenty of tables.

It was not long before a handsome supper was laid out. Many hands make light work, and there were many hands here both able and willing to assist: besides Mrs. Grey, Margaret, Effie, Ellen, and all the servants both of the Mill and Abbey, there were Kitty Grant, who ran nervously from table to table, doing more harm than good, her mind being so occupied with the question, "What will sister Sarah say?" that she did not know her right hand from her left, and laid knives, forks, and spoons in the wrong places; Mrs. Jefferson, who smiled placidly on all, rectified Kitty's mistakes, and gave help and advice wherever they were required; and little Arthur and Theodore, who ran backward and forward trying to help everybody, and in everybody's way.

Wilfred Grey, Captain Jefferson, and Julian, were engaged finishing the arrangements in the lecture-room, as it was still called, through courtesy to the departed bride and bridegroom. The chief difficulty, that of making a dry and sheltered passage between the room and the dwelling-house, was nearly done away with by the exceeding dryness of the ground, some days of east wind and hot sun having made the pathway as smooth and clean as a boarded floor. Then, as the sun set, the east wind died away, leaving the calm, still air unstirred by even a passing breeze, and so mild, that doors and windows might be left open with impunity, and passers to and fro needed little or no wrapping or additional foot gear.

At seven o'clock, Samuel Ward arrived, escorting Professor Thomas, the lecturer. He was a mulatto, with a sickly and particularly inefficient appearance, but dressed with the greatest care. Ah, what pains it took to keep up that spotless dress suit! and he and his wife had fasted from dinners for several days that he might gather together the price of the wondrously-shining boots which he now wore. He entered bowing, smiling, and rubbing his hands, and seemed at first almost too nice to partake of any of the tea and biscuits, which were prepared for the family in the morning room. Mrs. Grey, however, begged him to be seated, and when he did begin to eat, she soon observed that, although he strove not to appear so, the poor man was in



truth very hungry—too hungry, indeed, for dainty cakes and biscuits to avail him much. So, saying that she herself had not had time to eat enough dinner that day, she ordered in some more substantial viands, and asked all who were so inclined to partake of them along with her.

Very little tea had sufficed the young people, who had now gone away to complete the decorations of the great room ; but the master of the house and Samuel Ward were very willing to have something more solid than tea and biscuits ; and, so encouraged, the dark Professor, with a smiling countenance, declared that, really now he thought of it, he believed he had, "in the multiplicity of his engagements, forgotten to take any dinner that day."

Tea was ended, but the company were still seated round the table, when the loud postman's knock, which generally announced the approach of Richard Maunders, was heard at the door of the sitting-room.

"Come in," said Mrs. Grey ; and the large man, his countenance bearing a look of deep, although subdued concern, entered. The corners of his mouth were depressed, and the hand which did not hold his hat was raised apologetically to his head.

"I jest came in, sir," he said, addressing himself to Wilfred Grey, "to mention that there has been a most awful mistake made about this here lecture. Not one has calculated to provide seats for the *awjuncce* to sit on ; and if some one would jest say what's best to be done, it w'd lift a great weight off the Captain's mind."

"Dear, dear !" exclaimed Samuel Ward, "I have often observed in such cases as these, that it is the most essential things which are forgotten. Julius had the management of matters. Does he suggest any remedy ?"

"Well, sir, he thinks that most part of the *awjuncce* will have to keep on foot all the evening."

"But he does not recollect, probably," said Samuel Ward, "that there may be several delicate females coming ;" and, looking round the room, he continued, "Thou hast not chairs enough, Julia, I suppose ?"

"There's seats enough," said Mr. Maunders, "to accommodate any that are downright delicate ; and may be the foreign gentleman might know of some sort of a lecture that

wouldn't require seats for everybody all at once. May be he'd have a banjo or a jumbo, or something that way about him."

Samuel Ward, not comprehending, looked at the Professor, and the Professor drew himself up, and looked defiance at Richard Maunders.

"This is strange, indeed," said lecturer, turning to Mr. Grey. "I have been at the utmost pains to prepare this discourse, and make it worthy of so distinguished an audience; and I had hoped, sir, that—that things would have been in readiness. You will have some idea of the labour which I have expended upon it, if you would but look over my notes; and also be able to form your opinion as to the merits of my discourse, in which I think I am justified in saying I have traced the subject from the fall of man to the present time."

Mr. Maunders raised his hands and eyes, as if in silent deprecation of some impending calamity; but Professor Thomas did not observe the gesture: he had turned to the back of his own chair, on which hung the light overcoat which he had worn, and in the pocket of which he had left his notes; but, alas! all was emptiness—the roll of paper was gone. He plunged his hand still deeper, he turned spasmodically from one pocket to another; but in vain, it was not there.

"Most extraordinary," said Samuel Ward. "Didst not thou put it in safely?"

"Certainly; but some one has abstracted it," exclaimed the Professor; and, turning to Mr. Maunders with darkened countenance and lowering brow, he said, "You appear to desire to prevent my lecture. Have you done this, sir?"

"Faith, no," replied the large man, between whom and the dark man there appeared to have arisen some kind of antagonism. "Faith, no; I never saw it, nor know nothing about it. It's a bad thing, Professor, to put the wrong saddle on the wrong horse."

"It must have dropped out of my paletot on the road; or stay, perhaps I left it on my dressing-table, and it may yet be procured. If this"—with a slight motion of his head towards Richard Maunders—"is your clerk or man of business, Mr. Grey, perhaps you would kindly commission him to go for it."

"That commission would be of too delicate and sairious a

nature for a man like me," said Mr. Maunders, again raising his hand to his head ; and softly rubbing his forefinger round and round among the side hair, he continued, " I've heered say, Professor, that the fox never sent as good a messenger as himself."

" Come with me, Richard, into the dining-room, and see how nicely we have laid out the supper," whispered Mrs. Grey, who had caught a gleam in the eye of the lecturer, and feared that something serious might come of it at last, if the two were left longer together.

" I fear it is too late to do anything about the notes at present," said Wilfred Grey, looking at his watch. " Perhaps we may defer the lecture to another time, and allow our visitors to amuse themselves this evening as best they may."

" But if it is lost," said the Professor, pathetically.

" We must hope for the best," said Samuel Ward. " It is wonderful how lost things turn up ; although it gives me great concern to think that this opening for usefulness should be so unexpectedly closed."

" It is not far from nine o'clock : let us see what they are doing outside," said Wilfred Grey ; and, taking the disappointed lecturer out to look at the room, he somewhat mollified his wounded feelings, by telling him that in a pecuniary way, at least, he should not be a loser ; and also by holding out hopes that the lecture might be delivered at some future time.

Pleasure is said to honour most bills drawn at the shortest notice ; and so it was with Captain Jefferson's proposed lecture on " The Horrors of War." Favoured by the mildness of the evening, all who had been invited came to Holybrook, enjoying and understanding the jest, and ready to be pleased.

At half-past nine the band of the —th Regiment struck up a merry air ; and the Marquis of Glarisford, who, although he was now a steady and useful member of society, had lost none of his gaiety, led Mrs. Grey to the head of the room, and dancing commenced at once with zest and spirit. The floor was all that could be desired, and the music excellent. The band, placed near the centre of the room, served for both the upper and lower house ; nor did the officers and gentlemen confine themselves exclusively to either end of the room, but dance

with many a pretty mountain lass, who shewed her graceful paces in jigs, reels, &c., smiling furtively all the while at the awkward attempts which her elegantly-dressed partner made to follow her in the mazes of a dance, which seemed so simple to her, although so intricate to him.

Kitty Grant sat with Mrs. Jefferson on a comfortable sofa, from which there was a good view of the dancers; and wondered how "mighty pretty it all was, and now really she could not see anything so objectionable in it after all—only, what *would* sister Sarah say?" But then as long as Samuel Ward felt easy to stay, Kitty thought she need not go; he had been at first, as he said himself, rather perplexed and put out; but, seeing the thing could not be helped, he walked up and down the room, and tried to comfort Professor Thomas, who certainly was not well pleased with the turn things had taken; until kind-hearted little Effie, perceiving the lecturer's disappointed looks, told her uncle to ask him to dance the next set of quadrilles with her. Whereupon the dark man brightened wonderfully, and was, for the remainder of the evening, as gay as any of the party, forgetting perhaps for the time the woes of his race, and even the more immediately pressing sorrows of his pretty, sad-eyed Quadroon wife, and their four little darkies, who rarely had quite enough to eat, and were principally clothed by philanthropists.

Little Arthur and Theodore Grey staid awake most valiantly until eleven o'clock, when the younger boy, suddenly succumbing, was carried away to bed; and Arthur, although stoutly denying that it was ever again likely that he should wish to sleep or enjoy himself at all in bed before midnight,—was yet induced by the offer of various tempting sugar-plums from out the depths of Mrs. Jefferson's pocket, to rest beside her on the sofa. "Just," she said, "my little pigeon trout"—such was the somewhat paradoxical form of endearment which the good lady used when she wished to be peculiarly insinuating—"Just while you're sucking these, you know; and after that, we'll see what can be done." Then, desirous to divert her grandson's thoughts into a less exciting channel, she began to tell him tales of Ballinabeg, in the County Carlow, where her father lived when she was a child; stories of the cows, the horses, the poultry, the flocks, and the herds. Arthur, think-

ing the time most unsuitable for such puerile anecdotes, resolved to rebel, and indignantly rejoin the dancers : he only waited till the next sugar plum should be disposed of. But while he waited, Mrs. Jefferson's discourse flowed on in its mild and soothing current, till just as she had come to the relation of how "Cousin Dinah, the housekeeper, used to get twenty pecks of hops, from out of which she made

'Twenty quarts of twinkledy-twink,  
And twenty quarts of very good drink,  
And twenty quarts of good lie-by,  
And twenty quarts of drink when you're dry,'"

the young hero's eyes closed upon the stirring scene before him, and he too was borne away, unconscious of the indignity.

"Poor little man!" said Mrs. Jefferson, as with smiling face she looked after the boy, whom she had packed comfortably into his nurse's arms; "Poor little man! doesn't he remind you of his dear grandfather, Kitty? But here comes Samuel. We can make room for him between us, can't we? Well, Samuel dear, what do you think of all this?"

"It is very unexpected to me, Charlotte, really very unexpected. I don't know what to think or to say about it. I had hoped much from the lecture; it might have had a very favourable influence on some now present. I think it would have been quite Wilfred's place to have sent a messenger to Professor Thomas's lodgings to see if the notes had been left there, and to fetch them. There would have been time enough."

"But dost thou not think they may have dropped out of the pocket of his coat on his way here?" asked Kitty.

"He fears they did, although I told him I thought it unlikely, as they made quite a bulky bundle, and he would have missed them at once. From what he tells me, his lecture would have been a most remarkable one, shewing the evils of war from a very early period down to the present time; and if it had been the means of leading any of these fine young military men to think more seriously of the life they are pursuing, it would have been very gratifying."

"Well, Samuel, I suppose it can't be helped now; and the young people don't look as if they were very sorry. Here is a

seat for you between Kitty and me," said Mrs. Jefferson, drawing in the folds of her thick black moire antique to make room for her brother—Kitty's much slighter person, and very succinct dress, occupying but a small portion of the sofa.

"Stay, Samuel," she continued, as the old man was about to seat himself. "What ails the tail of your coat? There must be something extraordinary in this pocket, it stands out so,"—and putting her hand into her brother's pocket, Mrs. Jefferson drew out a thick roll of paper. Samuel Ward had perhaps never in his life been so much tempted to utter a strong or unguarded expression, as when, on opening the roll, he found that it contained the lost Lecture, or rather, the notes, from which the Professor was to have traced the progress of war from the fall of man to the present time. To say that the good man grew red would give no adequate idea of the colour which overspread his always florid countenance, and rose even to the bare and shining crown of his head, as, turning over the papers, he assured himself that these were really the lost notes; but, "Well, well!" "Dear, dear!" and "Dear, dear!" "Well, well!" were the strongest expressions that he uttered. Then glancing sideways from sister to cousin, he said—not without a twinkle in the corner of his eye—"Don't say a word about it; I see it all now; young people will be young. But I won't give Julius the satisfaction of knowing that I found it." Then, as he saw the Captain's merry face glancing at him from some little distance, he bundled the papers again into his pocket, and tried to appear very solemn; while Mrs. Jefferson shook her head at her step-son, and shook her sides with an inaudible laugh; and Kitty, not believing that any one could be so audacious as to play tricks on Cousin Samuel, was inclined to think that the notes being found in his pocket, was one of those things which we cannot account for!

The young people were indeed having a very gay time. Both Effie and Ellen had danced with the Marquis of Glarisford, as well as with Colonel Ashton, and others of the notabilities present, while Wilfred, Captain Jefferson, and Julian were doing their *dévoirs*, as entertainers, in dancing with the lady guests.

It was past twelve o'clock, and nearly supper time. Most

of the workpeople had gone to partake of the substantial meal which was provided for them; only a few, who preferred recreation to refreshment, still remaining on the floor of the "lower house." Ellen and Julian—partners in the two previous dances—were resting for a few moments in a bowery corner, close beside the dividing pillars. Here branches of evergreens were tastefully arranged overhead, and amongst them crimson camellias and plants of the sweet-scented white azalia, whose blossoms filled the air with fragrance. The youth and the maiden were talking, but not on any particularly interesting subject, and thinking perhaps of nothing deeper than how pleasant it was to form a part of the gay scene before them. Yet they felt very happy, as young people will feel at times, without exactly knowing the why or the wherefore.

"I have lost the flowers from my hair!" exclaimed Ellen, laying her hand quickly on the thick plaits which adorned the back of her head. "Are they not gone?"

"Yes," replied Julian, as looking at the glossy coils, he thought that they needed little additional adornment. "Where could you have dropped them? Perhaps I shall be able to find them."

"Thank you, no. It would be useless amongst so many people, for they were very frail, although very pretty."

"Red and white blossoms, were they not—the colours you wear in your dress?" Then plucking a crimson camellia, he continued, "Perhaps this, with a spray of white azalia; will serve to replace them. See, they are exactly the colours you require."

"They are certainly much more beautiful than the artificial flowers which I have lost, but they are still more fragile, and—besides, I cannot fasten them into my hair, as I could the others."

"These are freshly opened, and will not fall off easily," said Julian, as he plucked the flowers, and gave them to his companion; "I wish the beautiful stefanotas had been in blow, it would exactly suit your hair, and would I think be as durable—for one night at least—as any artificial flower. I will be in full bloom before this great ball which is talked of at Garisford Castle—you will be there, will you not?"

"I hope so; I hear we are to be invited."

"And if I have a spray of the stefanotas for you then, will you not wear it?"

Ellen answered by a blush and a pretty dimpling smile; and bending her head, she tried to arrange the flowers among her plaits, but it was very difficult for her to do so, without either mirror or attendant, and they fell out as quickly as she put them in.

"Do allow me," said Julian. "I am sure I shall be able to twine them among your plaits, so that they will be quite secure."

As good as his word, and with very dexterous fingers, Julian was arranging the flowers amongst the glossy plaits; Ellen's head was slightly bent, and neither she nor the young man observed a figure muffled in a worn shawl, who had been for some time watching them from behind one of the leafy pillars close by; till a small cold hand was laid on Ellen's arm. Starting at the chill almost death-like touch, she turned quickly, and saw close beside her, the beautiful but haggard face of poor Peg Ryan.

"Miss Ellen!" she whispered. "Oh Miss Ellen, and Master Julian, you that are happy and blest of the Lord, and won't niver know what it is to have the heart torn out of yes night and day, Oh do for the love of heaven have pity on our sows, and come yourself Masther Julian, and bring the Doother—no, don't come alone, but bring the Doother, and come to Iveagh."

"Why, Peg! what is the matter? Is your father worse?"

"He's dead!" replied the woman, almost in a whisper.

"So suddenly at last!" said Julian; "I saw Nance and Peter here not half-an-hour since, eating and drinking in the barn, and concluded that Christie must be better, or they would not have left him."

"Oh sir, he is dead! he is dead!" repeated Peg, in the same hard whisper.

"And did they leave you to attend him, while they came here?"

"Aye, sir, me and Patsy," and she shuddered.

"Poor creature!" exclaimed Ellen; "and were you alone with him when he died?"

"Oh! for the sake of the Blessed Virgin, Masther Julian!" said the poor woman, without replying to Ellen's question,



"Look out the Doether, and come ye's down to Iveagh at onct; and maybe they'd let it alone, an' not call down the vingeance of Heaven on our heads wid disturbing the poor cowl'd corpse."

"I shall look for Dr. Grant, if you like, Peg," said Julian; "but what can he do when poor Christie is dead? Wait here for me one moment, will you not?" he continued, addressing Ellen. "I think I saw Dr. Grant at the other end of the room. I shall speak to him, and return to you at once."

As Julian went, Ellen turned to speak to the poor woman, but she had disappeared. There was a general stir in the room, and Captain Jefferson was approaching; he had come to take Ellen in to supper.

"Now have I not exerted myself handsomely to lose my wager?" he said, as he gave her his arm.

"You have, indeed," replied Ellen, "so handsomely that I shall exonerate you from fulfilling it."

"No, no," said the Captain, shaking his head, "that won't do. Honour bright. A wager is a wager, and nothing can cancel it. Have you been standing here alone? I was looking for you everywhere."

"Your brother had but just left me; he said he would be back in a moment."

"Ah; I saw Julian at the other end of the room. He was looking for Dr. Grant, although I told him the poor man had been called away to see a patient near Glarisford, more than twenty minutes ago. I have been all the evening in the line of my duty—as Mr. Ward would say—dancing with our lady guests; but remember, after supper, you have promised to be my partner."

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## CHAPTER XVI.

It was far into the small hours of the night before the guests took their leave. No *contretemp* occurred, no damp to the night's amusement, and it was universally admitted, that there never had been an assembly in Glarisford or its neighbourhood more enjoyable than this impromptu dance at Holybrook Mills.

The Marquis of Glarisford, Lord Lieutenant of the County,

and Colonel of the Glarisford Artillery ; Colonel Ashton, with all the officers of the regiment then quartered in the city ; Mr. Jones, the County Inspector of Police, with several of his sub-inspectors, three or four Justices of the Peace, and many minor Government officials, passed a pleasant evening, ate an excellent supper, drank health and prosperity to the bride and bridegroom, to the host and hostess, &c., &c., and rode home well content with their entertainment.

But the first news with which Holybrook and its neighbourhood were greeted in the morning was, that notwithstanding the close proximity of all these magnates, the Rectory had been broken into during the night, and all the plate and portable valuables belonging to the newly-married pair, carried away.

Great was the consternation, both at the Abbey, and at the Mills ; and the first thought of everyone was, "What will Mrs. Tatlow say ? How shall we tell her ?"

There certainly had been carelessness, and that, too, caused by the night's entertainment, and by the desire of all to be present at the dance.

One old woman, alone, had been left in charge of the Rectory ; and she could throw no light on the subject. She had barred and bolted the doors and windows, as usual ; and going to bed had slept quietly until morning, undisturbed by the housebreakers, who must have been well acquainted with the premises, and made but little disturbance or noise.

Suspicion fell at once on Peter Ryan—or at least on the gang to which he was supposed to belong—and yet it seemed, that for both Peter and his mother, an *alibi* could be proved, for several persons had seen them in the dancing room, as well as in the barn, where it was said they had done full justice both to meat and drink. Nevertheless a portion of the strong body of police, who had come out from Glarisford as soon as the robbery was made known, went at once, accompanied by Captain Jefferson, Mr. Maunders, and others, to see if Peter had left his own miserable freehold in Iveagh, before they made any further search. The cabin was untenanted except by one lean hound, but the smouldering embers on the hearth showed that it had not been very long vacated ; and a countryman who was passing with a donkey load of heather, from the

mountain side, said that he had seen Peg go up toward her father's house not ten minutes before. But in any case poor Peg would have been left behind. A thorough examination was therefore made, in every part of the cabin, but no trace of any of the lost property could be discovered, and, indeed, there seemed no possible hiding-place in the wretched habitation, not even in the thin, broken, and mouldering thatch. "A miss is as good as a mile," said Mr. Maunders, as he emerged from the dark cabin. "Pether's away, I doubt; and you may have the sty to do what you like with now, Captain."

"The country's well rid of him, at any price," said Captain Jefferson; and as he turned he threw away the end of a cigar which he had been smoking. It fell on the low roof of the cabin; and the thatch, which the last week's sun and wind had made as dry and inflammable as tinder, ignited at once, and fanned by the strong east wind, which had again risen with the sun, a sharp tongue of flame darted upwards, and in another moment the roof was all blazing, crackling, and sparkling; whilst a volume of dense smoke flew away to westward, over the mountain side.

At the same time, a wild shout and a cheer for the Captain, rose from the crowd of ragamuffins—boys and men—who had followed to see "what the Peelers would do." The walls of the cabin being built of turf, were almost as inflammable as the roof itself, caught fire, and the whole tenement, from foundation to chimney, was soon one mass of flame, so that before an hour had passed, there was nothing left of Peter's dwelling but a heap of smouldering embers.

"You've made short work of the Fox's earth any way, Captain," said the constable, turning from the blazing pile; "but we must not waste more time. Haven't the Ryans another house near here?"

"Yes; the old man lives up the lane yonder, but he is dying, and I am sure that even if Peter has committed the robbery, Christie has had no hand in it."

"No, but it is our duty to search the house. The old woman's character is none of the best."

"None of the best, indeed! I forgot Nance."

As they reached Christie's house a wild mournful wail was heard to rise from within; and on opening the door, they saw

stretched on the low settle bed the corpse of the old man, whilst beside it sat Nance and Peg, wringing their hands, and uttering loud and shrill cries of lamentation. For a few moments neither of the women appeared to notice the intruders; then Nance, turning her face toward the door, said, "Come in; come in, all of yes; come in an' look at him, my Christie, my darlin, the light o' my eyes, ochone! ochone!" and again the wild cry of grief rose from both the women.

"My good woman," said the constable, approaching the bed, "I am sorry for your trouble, but we have no time to lose, and you must listen to what I say—can you give me any information as to where your son is at present?"

"My son! Is it Pether you mean?"

"Yes, Peter Ryan—the very man."

"Oh musha! musha! Oh wirra! and that I should have to tell it on my own son! Isn't he there in the room inside? and didn't he come home in liquor from the Captain's Ball, an' wouldn't as much as help to lay out his own father, that had died all on a suddint, while he was out divartin' himself."

"I saw you there yourself, too, old woman," said Mr. Maunders, "and you were tuckin' in the victuals and drink tolerable well, too, if my memory sarves me."

A momentary scowl passed over Nance's countenance; then softening its expression as if with an effort, she said, "Aye, ye may have seen me there for a minnit, didn't I run up to look for Pether, an' keep him out of mischief; and them don't know what starvation is, that thinks a poor crayture that hasn't seen the colour of meat for the blessed saints knows how long, could keep from eatin' a bit when it was set before her."

"Faith, Nance, I didn't know that the saints knew many partic'lars about you," said Mr. Maunders; but the woman not daring him, continued, in a voice shriller than before,

"But oh, musha! musha! sure I'd rather have starved outright, nor to leave my own man to the care of that spawl-keen of a girl, if I'd ha' known that he was so far through."

Peg glanced round with a wild look in her eyes, and a gasping sound escaped her lips, but catching the fierce eye of her mother-in-law, she cowered down again upon the bedside.

"We must see your son before we go," said the constable.

"In course, sir, in course. You'll find him inside, on the

bed, sleepin' off the liquor, and shame and blame on them that ever made him take to such courses, drivin' him out of his sinses wid their hard usage," she continued, scowling furtively at Captain Jefferson.

Peter was found lying on the bed pointed out by his mother, and was to all appearance in a state of unmitigated and helpless drunkenness. After many vain attempts to rouse him from his stupor, the officers of the law left him, and proceeded to search the house.

Nance, who appeared at first not to have heard of the robbery, as soon as the case was explained to her, gave—with the alacrity of conscious innocence—every facility and assistance to the searchers; but nowhere could the slightest trace of the lost property be discovered, and everything, in fact, combined to exonerate the Ryans from the suspicion which had rested upon them.

"Now if yes done," said Nance, whose fiery disposition appeared to have been suddenly softened by her husband's death, "if yes have done your sarch, which in course 'twas your duty to do; and if yes won't stop to wake him, may be you'd leave huz an' the poor cowl'd corp in pace. Sure, as soon as the buryin's over, we'll lave you the house to yourselves, an' poor ould Nance 'll go an' ind her days wid Pether in his hovel down below there."

"You'll not aisy do that," said a bystander. "Hasn't the Captain just put a spark to it, an' there's not a bit of it, small nor large, but's in cinders by this time."

Nance Ryan sprang to her feet, and glaring at Julius Jefferson with a fiendish ferocity, she uttered a curse upon his head too fearful to find record here.

"Whisht! whisht! woman," said Maunders, laying his hand on her shoulder; "Don't you know that curses is like the crows, and never fail of coming home to roost. 'Twas nothin' but an accident—the captain burnin' down your ould pig-stye."

"Accidence!" repeated Nance, her eyes still glaring wildly on the young man; "Was it accidence, his bein' tryin' to put Pether out of it, these three year 'n more, for the sakes of the stinkin' varmint in the cover? Was it accidence that he shot Pether's dogs that were as good to the boy as his own childer? Was it accidence that took the honest bread out of our mouths

an' left us to starve on the few coppers the neighbours gave us? Was it accidence that left my two fine sons to die in the frost, and the snow, and the cholera, and the fever, when they was fit to fight any ten of them heathens in the Crimea?"—and again, with wild shrill voice, she repeated her appalling curse.

"Don't imagine that you will frighten me by your jargon, woman," said Captain Jefferson; "your threats and your curses are nothing to me. It *was* unintentionally that I set fire to yonder hovel, but I have done nothing for some time which has pleased me so well. You can never return to it now; and you must quit this house also—the sooner the better. It was only for that poor dead man's sake that I allowed you to remain here so long. Come!" he continued, turning to the constables, "we are only wasting time here."

There were known to be other persons living amongst the mountains who were quite as regardless of the rights of property as Peter Ryan, whose present helpless condition, and the fact that he had been seen by many joining in the festivities of the previous night, seemed to clear him from the suspicion that he had had a part in this robbery. Vigorous search was made far and near by the Constabulary, but no traces of the missing property could be discovered; not the smallest article of it was offered at any of the pawn offices, either in Glarisford or any of the neighbouring towns; and the search was at length relinquished, as hopeless.

Mr. and Mrs. Tatlow, being, on their return from their wedding tour, met with much humility and shamefacedness by their erring relatives, were wonderfully magnanimous and forgiving, for Fanny could be very magnanimous and amiable, generally when it was least to be expected that she should be so; and the Rector was so happy, possessing so many new interests and comforts in his home, which had until now been a very lonely one, that the loss of spoons and forks, and other valuables, did not much disturb his equanimity. But Mrs. Stevens! yes, there was the rub—at least for poor Kitty Grant, when she returned to Glarisford the day after the wedding. Dr. Grant had gone down to Kerry, with the Marquis, to see some little lord or lady who was indisposed, and Mrs. Stevens was left alone with Anne Dempsey, who, not

having been allowed to accompany Dan Corr to Holybrook, had fallen into very doleful dumps—coming even to the weeping point, when she had seen Mr. Grey's Jenny set forth, gorgeous in a new blue Orleans dress and pink ribbons, to attend at the wedding breakfast. But when the account of the robbery, &c., reached Glarisford in of course a very exaggerated form, Anne's spirits rose, and to judge from her conversation, no one could suppose that she had had any desire to be of the party.

She "had always been a quiet girl, and she was thankful to say she had no hand in such like doings. I hear there's not a stone of the Tatlow's house left standin', ma'am," she said to her mistress, "though he and Miss Fanny left the most solemmist charges to Mr. Grey niver to take his eyes off 'it till they came back; but every mother's son of 'em—Miss Kitty and Mr. Ward and all—danced the whole of the blessed night, and never cast an eye on it."

Mrs. Stevens did not believe this statement to be all true; she knew that her quiet little sister had never danced one step to music in her life, and although Samuel Ward did not escape from the general disapprobation with which she viewed mankind, still she knew that he would not so far swerve from the even tenour of his way, as to take any active part in an amusement so much disapproved by the Society to which he belonged.

But he *had been* present, and Kitty *had been* present, there was no doubt of that, and the latter, at least, should hear more about it.

Sarah Stevens sat alone, but not lonely, nursing her wrath to keep it warm, and experiencing that peculiar exhilaration of spirit which the just ought to feel when about to bring the criminal to justice. In this frame of mind it was wonderful how rapidly the knitting of her Affghan blanket proceeded, and she had no idea that it was so late, when at six o'clock the culprit arrived in the Holybrook covered car, and at the same time Anne came in to lay the tea-things.

Tea was, however, got through without any allusion to past or passing events; and Kitty, although her heart sank within her, when she saw the cloud resting on her sister's brow, tried

to assume an easy, lightsome manner, which was by no means natural to her, asking sudden and irrelevant questions about the pig, the cow, the garden, &c., &c. But it was of no use: Sarah saw through it quite well, and would only reply in monosyllables; and the sisters sank into complete silence, until the tea-things being removed, and Anne, who had remained as long as was possible in the hopes of being "in at it," at last left the room.

Then Sarah Stevens, drawing her shawl more closely round her, said, in an awful voice, not loud, but deep, "What is all this, Kitty?"

"Which, sister?" asked Kitty, with a trembling but most illusory hope, that Sarah might not have heard the particulars.

"Thou knows very well what I mean. Wert not thou at this place of diversion last night?"

"I thought thou gave me leave to attend Fanny Grey's wedding?"

"I am not speaking to thee of the wedding breakfast, although I really should have thought that a person of thy age might have been satisfied to stay at home with an invalid sister, instead of running about amusing thyself."

"Indeed, Sarah, I thought thou wert pretty well."

"I am never well."

"But a little better than usual," suggested Kitty, meekly.

"I don't think thou considered much about my health at all."

Kitty's mental eye turned inward, and not being able to see that she had considered much about it just then, she was silent.

"What dost thou suppose 'Friends' in Dublin would say if they heard thou hadst been present at a dancing entertainment?"

"But really, sister, I thought it was to be a lecture till quite the last, when they began to play the music."

"And didst thou leave the room at once?"

"I was just sitting with Cousin Charlotte on a sofa," said Kitty pleadingly; "and then, after awhile, Cousin Samuel came, and we were quite comfortable; and the young people seemed to be enjoying themselves, and I could see nothing at all so very objectionable——" then poor Kitty burst into tears.



But Sarah Stevens was not one to be softened, or turned from the straight line of her duty by any such display of feeling. She continued her discourse until Kitty felt herself to be the most erring of women—"women Friends," at least—felt, indeed, before she went to bed that night as if evils in general, and the robbery at Holybrook in particular, had been caused by her "want of faithfulness," as her sister expressed it, in not bearing testimony against such proceedings. She hoped that perhaps Cousin Samuel, and surely dear John, the two men of all the world whose opinion she most valued, might comfort her a little, and not look on her conduct as so very shocking; but the Doctor was so much engaged just then, that he was seldom at home, coming in only to take his meals hurriedly, and at irregular hours; and Samuel Ward did not come at all, so that, left alone with Sarah, the time was very low, and tears were frequently Kitty's portion.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

DURING the excitement caused by the search for the robbers among the mountains, the Marquis of Glarisford several times called at Holybrook—both Mills and Abbey; and the approaching festivities at the Castle being spoken of, it was natural that, although the general invitations were not yet issued, he should invite all those who had so lately entertained him.

Effie and Ellen Walker obtained permission from their parents to remain in the neighbourhood of Glarisford till after that great event, which, however, was not to take place until the second or third week in May, when the Earl of Carlisle was expected to spend two days with the Marquis of Glarisford; and all the nobility, gentry, clergy, and, indeed, everyone of the least note in the county were invited to meet their Viceroy at an evening entertainment, which was to be more of a reception than a ball, although it was understood that the less staid portion of the assembly were to have as much dancing as they pleased.

It had been arranged, that after Fanny's wedding, Mr. Grey

and Margaret should spend a few weeks at Lowbridge with Mrs. Walker—Mrs. Grey's eldest daughter, and the mother of Effie and Ellen. The girls were to have returned home with their grandfather and aunt, but Mrs. Jefferson begged that they might now pay her a long promised visit. "I'd enjoy so much having the girls," she said, "and so I am sure would the dear boys, who are often lonely enough, and you know, Margaret, my dear, I can never keep poor Julius at home unless I have some company or amusement for him. He'll be off to Kerry, or no one knows where, and his regiment may be ordered abroad any day, so that if I haven't him now, I may never see him again, poor boy!"

Margaret knew that Mrs. Jefferson's great care when her step-sons were at home was to see that their bodily wants were well attended to, and, chiefly, that their dinners were of the best. She had always been a great housekeeper, and although she did not now put her own hands much to these things, she spent most of the day in overseeing her household, so that the girls would be left pretty much to their own devices.

Margaret had perfect confidence in Effie's sense and steadiness; but Ellen, under the guidance of Captain Jefferson, might be led, if not into actual danger, at least into situations from which it would be quite as well for her to be absent—such as riding to the meet, and hunting with the gay young officers now stationed at Glarisford. Julius kept a horse peculiarly adapted for ladies' riding, and he had often tried to induce Effie to accompany him, either to the hunt or for quiet rides through the country. She, however, did not like to go, or was, as she said herself, "too great a coward." But Ellen was an excellent as well as fearless rider, and such an offer being made to her there was no probability of her refusing it. And after all, what reason was there for her to refuse, or for Miss Grey to object to her hunting. Many other ladies hunted, and Julius would surely take good care of her.

So Margaret, fearing that she herself was fast growing into a prudish old maid, allowed her nieces to go to the Abbey, and said nothing to them which might in any way lessen their enjoyment of the visit.

One of Margaret's greatest wishes—as has been before stated—was that Julian and Effie might become attached to

each other, and might not this visit bring to pass so happy a consummation: of any further complication she had no fears. Julius, certainly, was an unmitigated flirt, but so universal in his attentions, there seemed little fear that any one lady should at present lose her heart for sake of him, handsome as he was; at least, she did not think that either of her nieces would be so foolish.

The week after Mr. and Mrs. Tatlow's marriage, the two girls went to the Abbey. It was the height of the hunting season; and Julius never absented himself from his favourite amusement. Again he begged Effie to ride out with him, at least so far as the meet; but still she steadily, although smilingly, refused all equestrianism.

She was timid, both for herself and for Ellen, and begged her sister not to join in so perilous an amusement. Ellen, however, only laughed at her fears; but Mrs. Jefferson, taking Effie's side, a compromise was at length made. Ellen rode to the meet, saw the start, and then returned with Julian, who, although he was a good rider, did not care for hunting.

On account of the mountainous nature of the district, the immediate neighbourhood of Holybrook was unfavourable for the sport; and the hounds, generally, met in the more open country, on the other side of the Glaris.

This latter was a region full of interest to lovers of antiquarian lore and old romance. Ellen had often heard of the interest attached to this part of the country, and gladly acceded to Julian's proposition, that instead of returning at once to Holybrook they should explore some of it together.

Julian was familiar with the legends connected with the fairy mounds, the ancient cromlechs, the earthworks, the old burying grounds, and the ruined castles, and the two young people spent very happy mornings in visiting these places of interest, riding from one to the other along the dry, smooth roads, or through pretty lanes, on whose banks the sweet spring flowers were peeping out, and where the blackthorn spread its profusion of leafless blossoms, mingled with the bushes of the golden furze.

Far pleasanter it was than following any wild course which it might please Master Reynard to lead his pursuers.

Captain Jefferson would say very pretty things to induce

Ellen to accompany him; but he was not willing to forego, even for her sake, the pleasures of the chase.

So Julian and Ellen rode alone, and seldom returned to Holybrook long before Captain Jefferson, both the hunter and the mere riders being then ready to enjoy, to Mrs. Jefferson's full satisfaction, the good dinner which she had seen prepared for them, but not too tired to spend the evenings pleasantly in reading, music, or social conversation: and for three whole weeks, to the good mother's great satisfaction, Julius, as well as Julian, spent all their evenings at home—at least, with their own family, for there were a few little quiet gatherings at Wilfred Grey's, the Rectory, and elsewhere.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

"THERE's nothing like horse exercise for young people," said Mrs. Jefferson to Effie one evening, as from the drawing-room windows she watched Julian and Ellen, who now rode towards the Abbey at a brisk canter. "I wish you'd ride sometimes, Effie, my dear. Look," she continued, as the young people reined up their horses at the door; "see how bright and well they look; Ellen, to be sure, is always as bright as a blossom; but really Julian is getting some colour in his cheeks, and his whole countenance has a bright healthy look I never observed in it before. I am sure it must be from horse exercise, and giving up the books and the fine arts for awhile. I was sorry to hear him talking to Ellen of going to sketch, last night; he'll lose his health if he begins to stoop over those drawings again, and the smell of paint is so unwholesome. Here, too, comes my fine, handsome lad," continued Mrs. Jefferson, as Julius, mounted on his beautiful hunter, was seen approaching, in an opposite direction from that by which the others had come. "Now, Effie, my dear, did you ever see a much finer young man? is not it a sad pity he should have to leave his own country? and I can't have the same feeling about the profession he has chosen, as if I had not been brought up a 'Friend.' His regiment must go abroad soon. Colonel Ashton told

me the other day that it was quite uncertain when they would have to go ; it might be in a month, or it might not be for a year."

"They seldom go quite so soon as is said at first," replied Effie.

"I don't know, dear ; we can never be sure. How good he has been in staying at home with us every evening for the last three weeks, though part of the time we had not even Samuel here for him to talk to, and you know men do require men's society. Has Samuel come in, do you know ? he was over at the Mill."

"Yes ; I saw him come up the avenue half-an-hour ago."

"Then I suppose he is in the dining-room ; he is so fond of warming himself before dinner. I must go to him ; he promised to call to see Peg Ryan, and bring me word how she is, for I can't get up that steep lane to their house."

"But do tell me, Mrs. Jefferson, won't you, the next time you have to send there. I should be so glad to be your messenger," said Effie. "I thought I heard that they had all gone to Ballynock ?"

"No, indeed ; that poor young woman is not getting on at all. Her wretched little infant is three weeks old now ; it was born the day Christie was buried. They put the creature into the bed they had just taken the corpse out of, and she has not risen since. I don't think she'll live. Julius, my dear," she continued, as her step-son entered, "I was just speaking of the Ryans."

The young officer uttered a hasty exclamation, very derogatory to the family mentioned by his mother. "I beg your pardon," he then said, turning to Effie ; "but really these Ryans are like a perpetual blister. I can't imagine why Maunders won't put them out, and have done with it."

"Yes, my dear," said Mrs. Jefferson ; "but the poor young woman is dying, or, at least, very ill. As soon as they can, they have promised to move to Ballynock ; indeed, I shall be very glad when they go, for scarcely a night passes that we don't lose a duck, or a goose, or some of the fowl. Maybe it's the fox ; but I think not."

"You may not only think it, mother, but be perfectly sure of the fact. Peter's hounds have not left a fox in Iveagh ; I

wonder, for the sake of his own character, he did not leave one at least to carry his sins on its back. Is dinner ready? I have just received orders to go with some troops to Dublin, and must be off at nine o'clock."

"At nine o'clock to-night!"

"Yes."

"But you don't mean to say that you're going altogether?" said Mrs. Jefferson, aghast.

"No; please goodness I shall be back in a week or two. I heartily wish it had happened otherwise," continued Captain Jefferson, with a very audible sigh; and whilst his mother left the room to speak to the cook, and hasten the proceedings of that functionary, he said to Effie, "I never knew how sweet home was, or might become to me until these last three happy weeks. But you surely will not have left this before my return."

"That depends on when you return," she replied, smiling.

"And does it make no difference to you whether I return or not?" said Julius, taking a seat near Effie, and watching the pretty nimble fingers as they worked at a long slip of embroidery. The girl bent her head a little, and the nimble fingers worked a little faster. She did not want to answer such questions. Julius Jefferson had said many pretty things to her since she had come to Glarisford; perhaps rather more than pretty things—words such as in her quiet home-life had never been addressed to Effie before—so flattering, so tender, so insinuating; and yet she could not divest herself of the idea that they all had a tendency to double *entendre*—that they might be taken either as meaning a great deal or nothing at all. They seemed to her like the words of a man well versed in the world's ways, who knew how much he might safely say, just bordering on, without actually reaching, any serious declaration.

She had looked steadily into her own heart, and it had told her that the handsome, gay young officer might, if she were not careful, occupy too large a place there. She knew that, as yet, she was heart whole, or nearly so; but she could not answer for the consequences if these attentions were to continue much longer; besides, did he not speak to other girls just as he spoke to her? He might speak to other girls as he pleased, as flatteringly, as tenderly, as flippantly, but while he did so

he should not address her in the same manner—he should not offer his tinsel in exchange for her fine gold.

“I told my mother that this absence would be only temporary,” he continued; “but I may be mistaken. Colonel Ashton cannot say positively. Ah! Miss Walker, will you not have one sorrowful thought for me when I am gone?”

“Did you not say you would be back in a week or two?”

“Well, be it so; but in any case I shall not be much longer in Ireland. The final farewell will soon come, and I shall be absent for years, perhaps for my whole life. Ah! if you only knew how sweet it is to be remembered when we are far away!”

“Surely there are many to remember you, Captain Jefferson.”

“Yes, I suppose so. I am not without friends; but,” and his voice took a tenderer tone, “will not you, Effie, remember me, and think of me sometimes?”

She did not reply; her head was bent low over her work, and a soft flush suffused her generally pale cheek.

“It is not much to ask,” said Julius, in a soft, pleading tone.

Effie raised her head, and moving a little back, she—although still blushing, bright as a rose—lifted her clear blue eyes to the face of her companion, and replied—

“I cannot answer such questions, Captain Jefferson. Please do not say any more.”

“Why?” pleaded the young man; and he would have taken one of her small white hands in his own, but she drew it back.

“I only ask you to say that you will be sorry for me when I am gone. Is that so wrong in me? and would any other lady of my acquaintance refuse me her hand at parting—parting, perhaps, for a lifetime?”

“I can only say what I have said, or speak more lightly,” replied Effie, as she nervously gathered together her working materials. Just then Mrs. Jefferson, Ellen, and Julian entered the room, and dinner was announced.

“Take my arm, mother dear,” said Julius. “You will be sorry for your poor scapegrace when he is thousands of miles away, won’t you?”

“Sorry, my boy! sorry!” said Mrs. Jefferson, as she placed her arm within his; and the remainder of the sentence was somewhat incoherent.

Effie, following with Julian and Ellen, felt that this was ad-

dressed to her—felt that Captain Jefferson was unjust, and also questioned in her own heart whether she had not been discreet above measure.

At dinner, Julius was gay and unconcerned as usual; and Mrs. Jefferson, although she was at first in rather a showery mood, cheered up, and, like the Patriarch, tried to show her affection by making his portion great, or, at least, very dainty. He said nothing now of not returning soon, promised not to be away much more than a week—would certainly be back before the Marquis's ball, and said, as he shook hands with Ellen at parting, "Remember, I have engaged the pink lady for the first waltz, and the hope of such happiness will keep my spirits up till my return."

Laughing gaily, Ellen made some light rejoinder; and Effie felt the sense of over-discretion weighing on her mind again, till, in the course of the evening, Mrs. Jefferson said, "Mrs. Ashton told me that Lady Cornelia and our dear Julius are such friends; she almost thinks—but don't say anything about it—that there is quite an understanding between them. She is the Marquis's sister, to be sure; but such things do happen, and where is there a finer or handsomer young man? He told me that he had been at the Castle for two hours to-day."

"Ah! oh!" said Samuel Ward, thoughtfully. "Dear, dear! that reminds me,"—and stooping a little towards his sister he continued, in a whisper, which he did not mean to be generally heard, "John Grant mentioned to me, that when Julius was at some festivities at the Castle, about Christmas time, he took occasion of a misletoe branch being suspended overhead, to impart a kiss to that titled young person thou speaks of."

"Tut, tut! Samuel," said his sister; "I would never have suspected you of telling tales about my poor boy."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

"How beautiful the mountains are to-day," said Julian Jefferson on the morning after his brother's departure, as rising from the breakfast table he walked to the window and looked



out upon the rugged chain of hills, whose highest summits rose not far from Holybrook Abbey.

"See how the granite rocks seem to glisten in the sunshine, whilst the deep ravines appear almost black by contrast. Is it not beautiful?" he continued, turning to Ellen. I think I could not live far away from the mountains; and yet I cannot tell what is this strange influence which they possess over my mind, felt so distinctly, and yet so impossible to define. I lift up my eyes to the hills, and my spirit seems to rise as I look. And so I believe it has been with men and nations through all ages. The earliest histories, both sacred and profane, tell of the influence which mountains have had upon the human mind, and of the honour in which the high places of the earth have been ever held."

"Now what would you think of going up Knockduff or Lugderrig to-day?" asked Mrs. Jefferson, wishing to draw something practical from Julian's remarks. "This is just the weather for mountain climbing; what do you say, girls? the car could take you a considerable part of the way, and I can have a nice little basket packed for your luncheon; only I am so sorry poor dear Julius is not here—he would enjoy it, as this is not a hunting day. Julian, dear, you can scarcely take charge of the two girls."

"You greatly under-rate my abilities, mother," said Julian, smiling.

"And our powers of taking care of ourselves," added the girls.

"Perhaps you would like to go, Samuel," said Mrs. Jefferson, turning to her brother, who was sitting at the fire reading the newspaper.

"I don't know, Charlotte; I'm not as young as I was once, and the mountains are very steep."

"Indeed they are; I once went up Knockduff and I thought I should never get down again with all my bones whole. You and I'll stay at home and take care of each other, Samuel. Perhaps Wilfred Grey could go; and here he comes, the very man we want," she continued, as the door opened, and Wilfred, accompanied by his eldest son, entered the room.

"For what purpose am I the very man?" he asked, as he shook hands with Mrs. Jefferson.

"To go up the mountains with these young people, my

dear. They'll fall over some of those frightful precipices unless they have a good guide."

"And what better guide could there be than Julian? He knows every rock in the range as well as I know the stones in my mill."

"Yes, my dear; but one man is not enough to take care of two girls."

"But how can I leave my business?"

"Indeed, you must come, Uncle Wilfred," said Ellen, as putting both hands on his arm she looked up into his face. "We shall take no refusal; and I am sure you may very well leave your fusty account books for one day."

"Well, Nell, I don't know that I have very much to do with my account books to-day; and as to fust, I hope there is none of it about my concern—it is a very bad thing among flour. Here, at least, is a little boy who I am sure would be delighted to join your party. He has just been wishing that he was a crow and able to fly away to the top of the mountains."

"Oh, papa, may I really go?" cried little Arthur, commencing a series of saltatory movements, expressive of delight.

"But will my little man be able for so much walking?" asked Mrs. Jefferson; and at the same time she dived into the depths of her pocket and brought up thence two lemon lozenges.

"Aye, indeed I will, gran," replied Arthur, as he placed a confection in each jaw. "I could walk from one end of the mountains to the other; I walked all through the Marquis's demesne yesterday, and up to the terrace where Uncle Julius and Lady Cornelia were walking, and she was a great, grand, beautiful lady; and then I went into the Castle, and she gave me a cake, and the Marquis said I was just like Uncle Julius."

"Take care that you're not telling tales out of school, Arthur," said his father, laughing. "Which of the mountains do you think of going up?"

"The view is equally fine from Knockduff and Lugderrig," said Julian. "Which would you recommend? My idea was that we might drive to the shoulder of Knockduff, then walk up the steepest part, and let the car go round to meet us again in Ballynock."

"A capital plan," said Wilfred: "suppose we make a descent on Father Drumgoole, and ask him for a cup of tea?"

"And don't forget to speak about a house for the Ryans," said Mrs. Jefferson: "it would be so nice to have them moved away before Julius returns."

"Very nice for us, perhaps, but not so nice for Ballynock; however, we may ask Drumgoole if there is an opening there for that promising family."

The basket being packed, and the vehicle—a light, outside car, drawn by a strong horse—brought round to the door, the party set forth.

The road, passing first through the plantations and more cultivated country which surrounded Holybrook Abbey, soon lead up to a wild and barren mountain land—bleak and barren, at least, in winter weather; but on this bright April morning, sky, earth, mountain, and even bogs were all lovely together. On the shoulder of the mountain the party alighted from the car, and commenced the more precipitous ascent on foot, following the sheep tracks, which led up mountain and across moorland, where little flowers spangled the grass, and wild hyacinths and cowslips unfolded their blue and yellow bells; and scattered through the fields, and along every fence and hedgerow the furze bushes were one blaze of blossom, looking like golden cushions set on the green sward, and filling the air with their luscious perfume, whilst above and amongst them buzzed and hummed the numberless bees and other insects, which flew from flower to flower, carrying away or sipping the honey which they found there in such abundance. The little velvet-headed stonechats, whinchats, and other small birds which love most the solitary moorland, flitted from rock to bush chirping and chattering, mindful and full of anxious thought concerning the nests, which lay snugly hidden in thick furze-bush or grassy bank; and far up in the blue heaven, themselves unseen, the larks poured forth their blithest song. Truly they sang their songs to some very blithe hearts on that bright April morning, as, exhilarated by the clear sweet mountain air, and the fresh beauty of all around them, the pedestrians took their way up the sunny mountain side.

Wilfred Grey was, constitutionally, a happy man; healthy, good-tempered, large-hearted, simple-minded, always ready to

please and to be pleased. He had taken the thread of life by the right end, and it seldom tangled in his hands. Running now with little Arthur to and fro amongst the furze and over the springy grass, now gathering flowers, now searching for birds' nests, now giving chase to some startled hare, he seemed almost as much a child, and quite as full of enjoyment, as his own son.

Julian's temperament was very different. He certainly was not, constitutionally, happy. His thread of life often tangled—came sometimes to what seemed almost a black knot, and in his dissatisfaction at the general state of things, he would wish that the end of the skein might not be far off. But in minds so constituted, if the sensitiveness to suffering is greater, the power of enjoyment is, in most cases, proportionally increased; at least, on this bright spring morning, with the mountain air and the healthy exercise quickening all his pulses, with Nature's sweetest influences around him, and with Ellen by his side, a disembodied spirit might have been satisfied with the happiness he enjoyed.

Ellen, too, was happy, as a fair maiden in the first bloom of youth could be; happy also in the consciousness—though this was unacknowledged to herself—that she was well beloved by one whom she loved well.

Effie alone, gentle, tranquil-minded Effie, was the one member of the family whose heart was burdened with a little secret sorrow. She could not shake off the idea that she had been silly—prudish, perhaps—in speaking to Julius as she had done. He possibly thought so too—perhaps, in his heart, smiled at her folly. And yet it was the simple truthfulness of her nature, which had led her to speak as she had spoken; and it almost frightened her to think how gladly she would have spoken differently—how very gladly she would have believed that Captain Jefferson's words were not only light words of passing compliment.

But she must not let her mind dwell on these things, and she did not. Her blood partook of the same genial mellow current which flowed in Wilfred Grey's veins; she tried to be, and was, happy in the present. She had done what she believed to be right, and could trust for the rest, and leave in wiser hands whatever the future might have in store for her.

And so she climbed the mountain side among the dark heather and the golden furze, and listened to the hum of the bees and the song of the birds, as peaceful in heart, if not as joyful as any of her companions.

Somewhat foot weary, and a little out of breath, the whole party at length reached the top of the steep peak of Knock-duff; and with a shout of triumph, little Arthur laid his hands on the largest of the granite rocks which crowned its summit.

"Mamma won't believe, nor Theodore, never, never, that I've been up here just near the clouds and the sun, as high and higher than any of the crow's nests. Will they, papa?"

"We must try to convince them of the wonderful fact," said Wilfred, as he stretched himself at full length on the soft green turf.

"And now, papa," continued the child, "I want you to tell me all about everything, and where they are."

"Your uncle Julian is much better qualified than I am to give a sketch of the world in general, and point out its most striking features. Besides, he's not half as fat as I am. Don't you see that your poor father's *kilt*?"

"Poor papa! go to sleep then," said the little boy, drawing the hat down over his father's eyes; and having done so, he betook himself to the place, some yards distant, where Julian and the two girls were resting at the foot of one of the rocks.

"Uncle Julian!" he cried, "I want to know, and papa says you can tell me, where everything is."

Julian smiled, and looked at Ellen. "Papa has a high idea of my abilities, particularly when he wants to have a quiet nap himself. What shall I show you first, Arthur?"

"The sea. I want to tell Theodore all about it."

"There it is, yonder, like a thin blue line along the horizon."

"Is that the sea? I don't care for that. It doesn't look grand at all. I was at Arranmore once, when I was a child, and I don't remember that the sea looked a bit like that."

"The ideas of children and grown people are often very different," replied Julian, with mock gravity.

"And where is Glarisford?"

"There, beyond Iveagh Hills, you can see the Glaris winding down the valley, like a silver thread, appearing and *disappearing*; and there where it takes the sudden bend, is

Glarisford, with its Castle-crowned hill, and its old Cathedral. I fancy, too, that I can sometimes catch the gleam of the red flag on Strongbow's Tower. Yes, there it is now, and now it has disappeared. When the wind waves it to the westward I can see it quite distinctly. Can you, Arthur?"

"Yes, oh yes, there it is! It looks as red as it did when I was on the terrace yesterday."

"Are you well up in the science of colours," said Julian, turning to his companions—"the properties and qualities of different colours, I mean?"

Both girls confessed ignorance.

"I am very ignorant, too," he continued, "although it is a subject I have often wished to study—I must do so some of these days. I know not what limit there is to the distance at which some colours are discernible—shades of red and purple particularly. When, in autumn or the end of summer, the heather is in full bloom upon these mountains, the purple appears as brilliant from the Abbey windows as when we are close to the flowers themselves: as brilliant from Glarisford as from the Abbey. I sometimes think that the brightness is increased by distance, though I suppose that it is a rather paradoxical idea. Were you ever here when the heather was in full bloom?" he asked, addressing Ellen.

"No, it was late in autumn when we were here before, and it was brown and faded then."

"You must not go until you have seen the mountains don their robes of purple. They are beautiful at all times, but they are regal then. I have lain for hours—yes, often for the whole day, amongst the heather, and, gazing from my purple throne, felt for a little while as if I had escaped from all the troubles and trammels of this mortal life, and were breathing purer air—as if for the time I had caught some faint notes from

"That world of the bright Beyond,  
Which never mapped out can be,  
But is whispered at times to ears that hear:  
Divined by eyes that see."

"Effie!" said little Arthur, "I am tired of Uncle Julian. Will you come and help me to find a bird's nest, down there among the furze bushes."

Left alone with Ellen, Julian spoke to her of many things—spoke of hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, which until now he had never breathed to any human being, not even to Margaret Grey, who, although kind, and sympathising always, did sometimes check him when she feared his fancy roamed too far. She did not believe that his dreams were useless, or without foundation, she only feared that they would make the dull realities of life more difficult to bear; she thought so; but she was mistaken, for unless Julian could have been made a new man altogether, his life would have been very chill without them; they were the sunshine which warmed his heart, which gilded its gloom, and threw for him a brightness over the dark places of the earth. For to a mind so constituted as was his, the inevitable sorrows and sufferings of humanity would press too grievously were there not some counterpoise.

Julian Jefferson was undeniably very romantic—and for a man, that is not considered praise—very full of imaginings, and high aspirations. Many are disposed to laugh at this kind of sentiment, to look upon it as the folly and illusion of youth, and it has very often its laughable side and its base counterfeits; but the real genuine thing—the longing for a higher life—the love of all that is pure and noble in this—is it not the gift of a beneficent Creator?—often serving

“To shorten the weary road,  
To lighten the heavy load,”

by which we must all travel and which we must all bear—a gift through the medium of which the eye can sometimes look upon a glorified creation and see the works of God as they really are, undimmed by the clouds of human frailty and suffering, untarnished by the rust of sin and sorrow.

Oh! they are very bright, those moments which have come to us, generally in youth, and sometimes brighter still even when youth is gone; when we are so happy that the whole world, as well as our own hearts, seems filled with hope and joy and promise. There are moments in almost every life which, were they but to last, might bring heaven down to earth. The weight of fear or sorrow, or worldly care, seems lifted from the heart, and all things are transformed into a more excellent beauty. But, alas! then comes the dis-

enchantment, the dis-illusion, or is it that the clouds of our fallen nature rise up, and obscure our vision ; that while the spirit is cumbered with mortality, it may not for any length of time rise above its trammels ?

Yet may we not hope that those moments of unalloyed happiness were the times when we saw things as they really are—that such as we saw them we shall again see them, when the earthy veil is withdrawn from our eyes—that the brightness is real and eternal, the darkness illusion, and to be done away.

During the hour which Julian and Ellen sat together on the mountain top Ellen said little, and yet the young man felt that he was understood by her, better than he had ever been even by Margaret Grey. Her fresh young thoughts, rising on wings unclipped by the sharp cold shears of experience and disappointment, were ready to soar away under his guidance to the bright regions in which he delighted.

Wilfred Grey had, according to the recommendation of his little son, fallen fast asleep, and now, waking up like a giant refreshed, and yet needing further refreshment, proposed that the basket of provisions—which had been carried up the peak by two mountain boys—should be opened.

Effie and Arthur were within call, and all the party being collected, and being also very hungry, were well content to do justice to the excellent fare which Mrs. Jefferson had provided for them.

Another hour or two were pleasantly spent in wandering along the ridge of the mountain, from different points of which views could be obtained of the more distant country to the northward, framed as it were, by the rugged sides of Lugderrig and Slievebawn, and looking blue and indistinct in the hazy distance.

Nearer, too, there were picturesque peeps down rocky glens, which the mountain torrents had been wearing deeper and deeper for thousands of years : and into little lonely tarns, one looking black as ink beneath its overhanging crag ; another surrounded only by banks of emerald sward, and bright as a polished mirror, reflecting back the sunny sky.

“ It is near five o'clock now,” said Wilfred Grey, as carrying little Arthur on his back, he, with his companions,



returned to the great rock, beside which they had at first rested. "It is full time for us to commence our descent. I desired Dempsey to have the car at Ballynock by half-past five. Look here," he continued, when, having walked a little further, they came to the edge of what seemed an almost perpendicular precipice. "Look here, girls; that will be our shortest way, but it is too steep for you? Ballynock lies just below. You can see Mr. Drumgoole's whitewashed house, and the cabins surrounding it."

"There can be no shorter way to Ballynock, certainly," said Effie, with a merry laugh. "But there seems to me danger of our falling down Mr. Drumgoole's chimney."

"No, it's not half as steep as you think. Come along."

This side of Knockduff was very precipitous indeed, but the little path, or rather sheep-track, took such a zig-zag course, and was so fenced by heather, furze, and granite stones, that there was little difficulty in obtaining a firm footing even in the steepest places.

What a delightful sensation it is going down a mountain, when all your muscles have been previously strained by a long ascent. No exertion is required; you have only to put one foot before the other, and away you go, without even the trouble of turning to look at the view which is now all before you.

Does the mind experience the same feeling, when, having soared as high as its wings are able to bear it, it comes down to earth, and earthly doings again? Perhaps so; perhaps it was something of this which made the voices of Julian and Ellen sound so joyously, and their laughter ring so clear and merrily, as descending the steep hillside, they felt only, as what they really were, happy youth and maiden—yes, almost boy and girl, rejoicing in life's glad morning.

Ballynock was, as Mr. Drumgoole often said, "as tidy a little bit of a village as was from that to himself:" this, if the expression were examined, was not, after all, very high praise, the reverend man being generally in or about, and never very far from his own whitewashed house, which stood in the midst of the village.

But it was as neat and tidy as could be expected, when the poverty of its inhabitants, and the barren nature of its surroundings, were taken into consideration. The granite rock

and furzy fields were more picturesque than productive, for tillage to any extent was impossible, and the men had to go a considerable distance to earn money even as day labourers.

The priest's little demesne was immediately below the upper ridge of the mountain: and the path by which his visitors now descended led straight into the garden, at the other end of which stood the neat whitewashed house, up the walls of which were trained pyrocanthus, corkus Japonica, monthly roses, and other climbers, hardy enough to bear the mountain blasts.

The garden was a curiosity in its way, and if there had not been any very high art displayed in its adornment, at least there had been ingenuity. The granite rocks which in many places rose up through the rich light soil, would, if they had been left to themselves, have made rockeries to delight the heart of any landscape gardener. But Terence Drumgoole had no idea of allowing his taste to be ruled by nature. Some of the rocks he had hewn into shapes more conformable to his own ideas of beauty; and on many he had piled up other stones, in strange fantastic forms, mixing among them roots and branches, of black bog oak, with such skill that whether intentionally or not, most of the rockeries appeared to have heads, and horns; some of them, legs and arms. But it was wonderful all the plants which he induced to grow over them, and through their crevices, so that after all, Nature did in the end gain the supremacy, veiling the ungainly structures in graceful garments of leaves and flowers. The whole enclosure was surrounded by a quickset hedge, which was cut into various forms: cones, pillars, and pyramids adorned the less conspicuous portion, but before the front of the house, facing the street, art had reached its climax in the production of a full-fledged bird of paradise, and a full-fledged peacock, which stood on the top of the hedge at each side of the entrance-gate. Which bird was which, it might not be easy to say; but after all, this was quite immaterial—they were both very remarkable, and, along with the rest of Mr. Drumgoole's curiosities, added much to the respect in which he was held by his flock.

Every available piece of ground within the enclosure was cultivated; where there were not flowers, there were vege-

tables ; and where there were not vegetables there were herbs, and small fruit trees. In this respect the priest set an excellent example to his flock, for the whole of this little demesne had been reclaimed from the barren mountain-side by industry and persevering labour.

Here, in the cool of the day, the Rev. Terence Drumgoole was walking when he heard strange voices close at hand, and turning saw the mountain party, coming down the steep path, and entering his garden.

"You're kindly welcome, Mr. Grey, and Mr. Julian," he said, as he advanced to meet them ; "as welcome as the flowers in May, ladies," he continued, bowing first to the girls, and then to the large yellow wallflowers which were blooming on a rockery close by. "I'm sure I'm for ever indebted to you for honouring my poor little—spot—with a call."

"Why, Mr. Drumgoole," said Wilfred Grey, "I don't know a more remarkable place than your's in the whole country side ; I could not have allowed these girls to go away without seeing it."

Terence Drumgoole smiled, looked around him, rubbed his hands together, and then said, "Well, though it's I say it that shouldn't, it has, I acknowledge, its striking points. But what is it compared to the Abbey ? or to your own most salubrious residence, Mr. Grey ? And this is the heir," he continued, patting little Arthur's curly head—"your eldest son, Mr. Grey ?"

"Yes, and a very tired little son he is. He'll sleep without rocking to-night, I think."

"Children for the most part can do that now," said Mr. Drumgoole ; "I hear the practice is given up ; but Mr. Grey, if you'd allow me to give your son some little refreshment, I think it would serve him : and if I might at all be so bold, as to offer you, and the young ladies—not forgetting Mr. Julian—a cup of tea, in my humble abode, I'd feel myself highly honoured by your doing me such a favour as drinking it."

"The obligation would be altogether on our side," replied Wilfred Grey. "Julian and I are both tea-drinkers, and I never saw the woman yet that wouldn't take a cup of tea whenever it was offered to her. What do you say, girls ?"

Mr. Drumgoole rubbed his hands softly together, while slightly waving his body backward and forward, he looked from Effie to Ellen for a reply.

"We shall be very happy to stay," said Effie, "and are much obliged to Mr. Drumgoole."

"You do me an unprecedented favour, Miss," said the priest; "and now, if you'd just look at my little rockery works and garden, for one minute, I'll step to the house and see about things, for the young ladies may be aware that tea's nothing whatsoever unless the kettle boils."

So saying, he hastened to a back window, at which—when he had tapped—there appeared the countenance of an ancient, and severe female—the wife of Tim, his man of all work—to whom he delivered many directions besides the very necessary one of having the kettle boiling before the tea was made.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," he said, as he returned, looking quite heated by the exertions which he had made in behalf of his guests, "everything will be prepared in one moment of time, and if you'll just step this way in the interim, I'll show you something that I think will please you."

He then led the way to a really picturesque nook where, under a great rock which sheltered it from the northern blasts, he had built a greenhouse of very small dimensions, and of very clumsy construction. It contained no rare flowers, but Mr. Drumgoole, with all the enthusiasm of a lately developed passion, looked upon it and his plants as being both wonderful and beautiful.

He had often seen really fine conservatories at the Abbey, Glarisford Castle, and elsewhere; but what a halo those two little words "mine own" will, for some people, throw over the humblest objects! He opened the door to admit his guests with as much *empressement* as the pardoning angel might have evinced when opening the gates of Paradise to admit the successful Peri—and then stood back to allow his guests to enter. There was not, however, room for more than one, at least one crinolined visitor, at a time. "*Pelargoniums—Ericas—Liliums*," he said, stretching his arm towards his little collection. The only plants yet in blow were two remarkably fine heaths, one red, the other pure white—they had been

given to him by the gardener at Glarisford Castle, and they had thriven beautifully in the light mountain soil.

"How lovely your heaths are, Mr. Drumgoole!" exclaimed Ellen, as she entered the little greenhouse.

"Humbly begging your pardon, Miss," said the priest, "those are ericas, not heaths, you do me the honour to praise. They are most remarkable fine, caused you see by the soil here among the rocks being so light and promiscuous." Then fearing that he had forgotten his manners in correcting Ellen so summarily, he, by way of peace-offering, plucked a spray of the pink and another of the white heath, and presented them to her.

"Your colours, are they not?" said Julian, who stood by her.

"Aye, sir," said the priest, smiling, and rubbing his hands; "but as I take it, neither the crimson nor the white could bear any sort of comparison to what's in Miss Ellen's lovely countenance."

Julian had meant only that these were the colours which she had before worn, and which he remembered very well. He had a particular dislike to personal compliments, and would certainly not at this stage of their acquaintance have ventured on such to Ellen. He looked, and was, annoyed; more particularly as he saw—although her face was somewhat averted—that she blushed, and he feared—rather unnecessarily, perhaps, that she too, was annoyed. Explanation would have seemed foolish, and turning from the door, he left the space for Wilfred and Effie to enter.

"A most remarkable little greenhouse, indeed," said Wilfred, who as he went in, narrowly escaped putting his head through the roof, for he was half a foot at least taller than the proprietor.

"Yes, sir; and would you believe it, Tim and I constructed the whole of the edifice with our own hands, saving the windows, sir, which I bought when they were taking down some ancient houses in Glarisford. But what is it all to you, sir, or to Mr. Julian, who is the happy possessor of such gorgeous conservatories. I believe, sir, he takes as much care of the flowers as his honoured and departed father did. Ah, sir, Mr. Jefferson was a man gifted by Nature with the most diverse and astonishing talents. What state would the lands of

Holybrook and Iveagh, not to mention this small village, be in, but for him. He was—shall I say it—a father to all his estate, sir. If he was living still things wouldn't be as they are. Not that I'd say anything whatsoever to the disparagement of the present possessors," he continued, quickly; "we all know what it is to have been young, and not to wish to have too much care on our shoulders; and then sure, there's Richard Maunders—and who cares to keep a dog, and have to bark himself?"

The large gaunt form of Mr. Drumgoole's servant was now seen at the end of the garden walk. She was making what seemed to be threatening gesticulations, at her master, although she only wished to announce that tea was ready. Mr. Drumgoole understanding her, asked his guests to enter and partake of the "humble meal which he had prepared."

If the curiosities of the priest's garden were surprising, those in the parlour were still more so: for here Nature had no chance, and Art reigned supreme. The tables, shelves, chimney-piece, &c., were covered with curious little ornaments and devices, in crockery ware, glass, shells, &c.; and there were many cases filled with stuffed birds, both native and foreign, although it was not very easy to distinguish the former on account of their strange attitudes, and the new arrangement of their feathers. The magpie spread its wings like a bird of paradise, and the homely appearance of the blackbird and the thrush was relieved by crests, and tails, robbed from some foreign bird of more gaudy plumage.

The walls of the room were completely covered with paintings and engravings; the latter principally those which the various Art Unions have made so universal; the former, which had been longer in Mr. Drumgoole's possession, were—excepting those over the mantel-piece—all, either the martyrdom, temptation, or glorification of saints. A Saint Lawrence, who appeared to be enjoying himself on the gridiron. A Saint Anthony, fat, fair, and flourishing, in the midst of his tempters; a Saint Cecilia; a Saint Agnes; and many others. The minor details of the apartment were not very exquisite; but as well as could be expected from the grim domestic, who must have seen at least seventy winters.

Whatever the meal which Terence Drumgoole now set before

his guests may have lacked in elegance, was made up in abundance. Effie and Ellen were sure, from the potency of the beverage, that there must have been at least half a pound of tea in the great Britannia metal tea-pot; and there was a quart jug quite full of thick cream; whilst the griddle cake actually overflowed with butter. The fresh mountain air, however, had so sharpened the appetites of all the party that they were willing to accept the solid good, without thinking of deficiencies in the manner of serving, &c., and accordingly made a very comfortable repast.

The strength of the tea might have been deleterious, but for being qualified by the rich cream; and perhaps the very buttery cakes would have disagreed, under less salubrious circumstances. Fresh air and healthy exercise are the best of tonics.

The car was now waiting, but Mr. Drumgoole would not hear of his guests leaving him until they had seen all his paintings, and articles of *vertu*; nor until Dempsey the driver had had as comfortable a meal as his master; and it was seven o'clock before they were under way. Little Arthur, when he had drunk as much rich milk, and eaten as much buttered cake as was possible under the circumstances, had, overcome by fatigue, fallen fast asleep, and was now bundled up in a rug, and so placed on one side of the car, with his body on his father's lap, and his feet on Effie's, he was conveyed home; and never wakened, at least consciously, until seven o'clock on the following morning; when he opened his eyes in his own little bed, and believed for some time that the mountain climbing, the pic-nic, and the supper at Ballynock, had been all a pleasant dream.

Across the field it was scarcely more than three miles from Ballynock to Holybrook, but the road taking a much more circuitous route, was fully six. The drive, however, did not seem too long to any.

Sufficiently tired to appreciate the rest, and the easy motion of the well-cushioned car, they were not too tired to enjoy the scenery, and the curious and beautiful effects of the evening lights and shadows along the hill tops.

The sun, although it had sunk to them behind Slievebawn, one of the highest of the range which stood away to the west,

still lighted all the mountain tops, and threw slanting rays of crimson, amethyst, and gold across the upper valleys, till sinking lower still, it left the whole range in shadow, looking almost black, the outlines sharp, and clearly defined against the transparent canary-coloured sky.

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## CHAPTER XX.

THUS Time was slipping pleasantly away at Holybrook. Young people generally find no great difficulty in dealing with that "old destroyer," when he meets them in pleasant places in the merry spring time.

Julius Jefferson had now been away a fortnight, and although he often wrote that he was coming back, he did not come. He was not detained by any duties connected with his profession, but wrote to tell of very gay doings at the house where he was staying, and that his friends would not yet hear of his leaving them.

Effie, although she had almost unconsciously to herself hoped that he had really wished to return before she and Ellen left the Abbey, and although she felt a little twinge of something uncomfortable about her heart at his evident carelessness, felt thankful too—felt like a bird which had been all but taken in some tempting snare, and, escaping, sees that what had been spread before it as grain was the lightest of chaff.

During these weeks she had altogether won Mrs. Jefferson's heart. The good lady had always liked Effie, but now she loved her dearly, and the more she saw of her, the more she wished that she might be permanently settled at the Abbey; she would be truly a help-meet for Julian—exactly what he required, and would be "the greatest comfort in the house." Effie was always ready to help Mrs. Jefferson in whatever she was doing; to sympathise with her about household affairs; to assist and advise in matters of needle-work or millinery; and to visit the poor on her behalf, taking to the sick the money and comforts which the elder lady provided.

"She's as good to me as a right hand," said Mrs. Jefferson to her brother one morning, when they were sitting together in



the breakfast-room. Effie had but just returned from executing some errands of charity, and had now gone with her sister and Julian to the conservatories, where the latter spent a part of every day pruning, dressing, and arranging the plants and flowers, and giving to them that kind of attention which a hired gardener seldom bestows—

"Just as good as a new right hand, if I could but keep her here altogether. Do you think there's any chance, Samuel?"

"Keep—her—here—altogether," said Samuel Ward, slowly and thoughtfully, repeating his sister's words. "Well, as to that, Charlotte, I really could'n't say. I suppose her mother will be expecting her home soon. Margaret Grey told me that after this entertainment at Glarisford Castle both the girls were to return home."

"Oh, yes, I daresay; but I don't mean that. Do you think there is any chance of either of the boys fancying dear Effie?"

"Well, now, I think we all fancy her, Charlotte; she is so sober and quiet in her ways that I could almost suppose she had been brought up in our Society."

"But, Samuel, do you think there is any chance of either of the boys fancying her—seriously, you know. Poor dear Julius must go away for years, I suppose; but Julian—what a pleasure it would be to us all if he brought Effie home here as his wife."

"Julian!" repeated Samuel Ward; "well, indeed, sister, I don't think I can give thee much encouragement relative to him. Dost not thou think it would rather appear as if he preferred Ellen?"

Mrs. Jefferson sighed. "Ellen's a sweet girl, and a lovely girl," she said, "and no doubt Julian appears to pay her the most attention; but one cannot always tell in such cases. It sometimes happens that people are quite deceived as to which of two sisters a young man fancies, till he just proposes for the one they least expect."

"Well, really, Charlotte, thou shouldst be much better acquainted with, and more clear-sighted, relative to matrimonial affairs, than I. Our dear father used to tell of a cousin of his who showed his preference for the young woman to whom he was attached by always avoiding her as much as possible; this may, perhaps, be a similar case."

"Tut, tut! Samuel; you know very well that Julian does not avoid Effie. He is very fond of her, I'm sure; and though he does appear to admire Ellen so much, he may really prefer Effie."

"Well, Charlotte, well! that is quite what I was saying," replied Samuel Ward, soberly; but Mrs. Jefferson knew from a certain elevation of brows and eyelids, which made the white ball appear all round the pupil of the eye, and also by a tightening of the lips, that her brother, sedate man as he was, was in his own way making light of her.

She accordingly laid her plump hand on his substantial shoulder, and giving him a little shake, said—

"I'm serious, Samuel, quite serious; and I assure you I am uneasy too, and almost wish I had not asked the girls to come here. I wish I could by any means discover which of them Julian really does prefer; I know he likes one of them, and now what should we do if they both preferred him?"

"Our dear father used to tell of another friend who, under similar perplexing circumstances, proposed for the young woman whom he thought would be least able to bear the disappointment," said Samuel Ward—his eyes were still round, and his mouth tightened into a small compass.

"Samuel," said Mrs. Jefferson, seating herself on a chair opposite to her brother, "you are the most provoking man I ever knew, I do believe there is no human being in the world so selfish as an old bachelor, who has got on smoothly and comfortably all his life without anything to trouble him."

"Dear, dear!" said Samuel Ward; then in a more serious tone—"Really, Charlotte, I'd be glad to help thee if I knew how; I always have heard that it was a little critical to interfere in these matters; thou, however, shouldst know better."

"Well, you see, I don't like to appear to notice things that way. But I was thinking if you'd just speak to Julian, and, in a cursory kind of way, ask him what his intentions are, with regard to—Effie, for instance. You know you were one of the boys' guardians, and it will be quite your place; if he's not in love with Effie he is with Ellen, I am quite sure of that."

"Thou art very clear-sighted, Charlotte, no doubt, very

clear-sighted, and I may say I agree with thee in the latter part of thy statement, and I am inclined to suppose matters are in such a state of forwardness with the young people that interference will make no difference one way or the other. But here they come," said Samuel Ward, resuming the perusal of his newspaper, whilst Julian and the two girls entered laden with flowers, some to dress the vases in the library and drawing-room, and some to be tied up and sent to the Rectory for Mr. and Mrs. Tatlow, who were that evening to have an unavoidable clerical dinner-party at their house—clergymen and clergymen's wives; the Abbey family had been invited to tea along with a few others.

"I shall leave thee to escort my sister and the girls to Paul Tatlow's this evening, Julian," said Samuel Ward, turning to the young man. "Wilt thou be able for such a charge?"

"I shall do my best; but why am I not to have your assistance? are you not going with us?"

"Well, no; I feel more inclined to spend a quiet evening with Cousins Sarah and Kitty."

"Perhaps Julius might be home to-night," said Mrs. Jefferson; "he wrote me that he would, though, to be sure, poor dear boy, that doesn't make me expect him the more."

"But the last of the hunting is to be to-morrow, mother," said Julian.

"Ah! then maybe we shall see him to-night. Are you inclined for a little more hunting, Ellen?"

"To-morrow!" said Ellen, thoughtfully. "No, I think not; I have some sketches to take before I leave the Abbey: perhaps I may finish the view of the ruins this evening."

"Yes," said Julian, "but there are many others. You have taken no view as yet from the opposite bank of the river; besides, you know, you spoke of painting some bunches of flowers."

"Ah, yes; I should like much to learn flower-painting, but there is so much to do that I fear something must be omitted."

"I hope not; I should not like to leave your education incomplete, so far as it is in my power to finish it."

Ellen smiled her thanks. "I wish, at least," she said, as she looked at a rare rose which Julian had plucked for her in

one of the conservatories, "I wish, at least, that I were able to paint a likeness of this; I never saw a more beautiful rose. But even if I could paint it, I could not preserve the delicate perfume, for it is as sweet as it is beautiful."

"I am sorry to say that that is beyond my skill," said Julian; "but although the rose does not blow freely, there are other buds on it now, and I shall keep them all for you."

During Captain Jefferson's absences from Holybrook Abbey, dinner was generally early. Samuel Ward preferred it being so, and it made little difference to the rest of the family. There had not been so much riding during the last fortnight; and the young people spent the long, bright afternoons either in rambling amongst the fields, or sitting in the open air, working, reading, or sketching, in which latter art Ellen had, under Julian's tuition, become quite a proficient.

It was May now, and the weather was lovely beyond what artist could paint, or pen describe. There had been a succession of those days which sometimes come to show us, even in these northern climes, that the poet's dreams of spring are not altogether dreams; when the ethereal mildness, the terrestrial greenness, the bright blue heaven above, the flower-decked earth beneath, the sweet singing of birds, the sweet scent from opening bud and blossom, the fresh loveliness of all nature, make us think that such indeed must have been

"The season prime, of sweetest scents and airs,"

which breathed around our first parents in Paradise—that such may be the sweet influences which will form a portion of the happiness of a life which is to come!

Effie's tastes were not so much for the fine arts, and it generally suited her better to apply herself to needlework, whilst Ellen painted, and Julian either painted or read aloud.

On this evening they had brought their books, works, &c., to a sloping grassy bank, from which there was a very pretty peep of the old ivy-covered ruins, with the mountains beyond, and one or two of the old Italian firs in the foreground.

Effie's dexterous fingers were busily employed in some millinery work, which Mrs. Jefferson was to wear that evening at the clerical party, whilst Julian read aloud from Tennyson's poems, and Ellen was engaged with her pencil.

"Oh, early life! oh, early love!  
Oh, lightsome days and lang!  
When honeyed hopes around our hearts  
Like fairy blossoms sprang!"

Why does cold winter ever follow on such days as this?

Ellen's sketching was very successful that evening. It was a pretty picture, although taken rapidly and without any great nicety of finish. True, no one, certainly not a beginner, could approach very near to the lovely tints which decked the earth and sky on that May evening; but the little sketch was very successful—really pretty.

"Will not that do?" she asked, as she put the last touches to the picture.

Julian and Effie leant forward to examine it, and both gave to it the ready praise which their love for the artist and the real prettiness of her work suggested and merited.

"May I remind you," said Julian, when he had closely examined the picture, "that you once promised me one of your paintings. This is the very best of them, and I know it is very presumptuous in me to ask for it;" then, smiling, he looked into Ellen's face for an answer.

"Ah! but it requires two or three more touches," replied Ellen, and as she spoke she blushed bright as a rose in June; "you would not wish for an unfinished work"—and she stretched her hand to take the picture.

"A bird in the hand," said the young man, still holding his prize—"better an unfinished sketch in possession than a finished one which you may forget to give me."

"But I shall finish it now, here," said Ellen, and Julian gave it back.

"Please, y'r honour, Misther Julian," said a cow boy, who just at this moment had come through a neighbouring hedge, "Misther Maunders wants ye up to the pasture-fields, sir, to see the new cows that he's brought home from Ballynock fair, sir."

"Tell him I can't go now," said the young man, impatiently.

"He tould me to tell you, sir, that he couldn't no ways do without you, sir, for he wants you to see if you'll have 'em all, and for to pay, sir; an' they are the handsomest bastes you ever saw."

"I should have been willing to imagine them," said Julian, rising slowly; "but I suppose I must go. Where do you say they are, boy?"

"In the fields above, sir; and his Riverence is there, and Mr. Ward's jest gone up, an' they're the purtiest heifers ye ever seen."

"Shall I find you here when I return?" asked Julian, as he was going.

Effie looked at her watch. "It is six o'clock now," she said, "and Aunt Fanny's tea-party is to be at eight, so I think we cannot stay here much longer. I must go now to show this cap to Mrs. Jefferson, and see if it meets her approval; are you ready, Nell?"

"I shall be ready in a moment, but do not wait for me; I shall follow you when I have darkened the fir-trees a little, I see they require it."

When Ellen had put these last finishing touches to her picture she collected her painting materials, pausing frequently to look round upon the sunlit landscape, which lay so soft and green beneath the background of rugged mountains, and to think—or, perhaps, rather to feel without any effort of thought—how beautiful, and how full of life and gladness the whole creation seemed.

Then, rising, she took the little field-path which led down to and through the ruined Abbey, for this was the prettiest, if not quite the shortest way to the house. As she passed through the ruins, she was struck by the picturesque beauty of one of the heavy-arched windows, over which ivy hung in rich clusters and graceful pendants. What a lovely picture it would make with just that glimpse of Lugderrig beyond.

So thinking, Ellen seated herself in a nook at the further end of the building. It was close beside a green lane which skirted the Abbey, but screened from the observation of passers by a low ivy-covered wall. Her seat was a mossy stone, around which the graceful harebells were growing, and above which, among the budding branches of a young ash, which had struck its roots into the ruined wall, a thrush was singing joyously to his mate, as she sat on her nest snugly amongst the thick ivy. Ellen's young heart was full of happiness, as uncalculating, perhaps, but quite as complete, as that which gushed forth in

the song of the bird above her head, while with nimble fingers she worked at the pleasant task, and thought to herself, "How much they—he—will be surprised when I bring home this second picture."

She had sketched the arch, the ivy, and the mountain beyond, and had begun to lay on the colours, when she heard voices and footsteps approaching, and with them the lowing and trampling of kine. As the lane at the other side of the wall led from the farm-buildings to some of the upland pastures, this was no matter of surprise; and Ellen, knowing that she was safely sheltered both from the cattle and from the observation of passers, worked on undisturbed, although both the drivers and the animals—the new cows from Ballynock fair—filled the air as they passed with shouting, lowing, and trampling, drowning every other sound, and altogether silencing and putting to flight the thrush which had sung in the ash-tree overhead.

They passed, and Ellen felt a sensible relief, or would have done so, but that, instead of the shouting and hallooing which had filled the air, there arose the fumes of not very fragrant tobacco; and the voices of Terence Drumgoole and Richard Maunders were heard, engaged in deep conversation. It seemed as if they had stopped, and were, probably, leaning against the wall on the opposite side of which Ellen sat. She had not the slightest desire to listen, but her doing so was under the circumstances quite unavoidable, nor could she leave her seat without attracting their attention.

"He was beginnin' to look after things a little better before the young ladies came, and 'll likely be a shade better again when they're gone," said Richard Maunders. "Of course, he's by way of in love with Miss Ellen now, but he won't be so long—that sort of a notional young man keeps to nothin': it 'll be paintin' one day an' fiddlin' the next, an' makin' love the next, an' the whole consarn 'd go to rack and ruin only for me, and the eye you have to Ballynock side."

"Sure enough," said the priest, "sure enough; but, you see, having always been an advocate and patron of the fine arts, I can make more allowance, maybe, than you can, Mr. Maunders, for these—shall I call them tendencies of Mr. Julian's. He'll manage his affairs the right way yet, you'll see, some day."

"A pig may fly, but it's an unlikely bird," replied Richard Maunders, sententiously.

The steward was much attached to both his young masters — more particularly to Julian, whose delicate boyhood he had helped to tend ; but it would have been too much to expect from human nature that he should not sometimes complain of their carelessness and consequent backwardness in appreciating his own merits, when he felt that he was spending his whole life in their service.

Julian had but just now received the surprising bargain of beautiful heifers from Ballynock fair, with a coldness and evident desire to hear as little about them as possible, which had deeply wounded the heart of the large man.

"Fancies, and perhaps I might say follies, are to be expected in youth," said Mr. Drumgoole. "I would'nt speak a word again, the fine arts being always their patron, as I said before, though I don't expect you to sympathise with these feelings in either Mr. Julian or me."

"Faith an' you may say that," growled Mr. Maunders, accompanying his words with a mighty puff of tobacco smoke.

"No," continued the priest, "but I agree with you, relative to the young lady ; triflin' with the affections is a thing I never allow in my flock. I says, when I see it, says I, 'young man, you must either be on or off. If you're going to marry, I'll marry you, an' welcome, but if you're not, then leave off courtin'.'"

"Faith an' I wish you'd say the same thing to Mr. Julian ; though as to his marryin', as the Mistress expects—unless some lady comes and asks him straight and plain—he'll never marry. He'll jest go danglin' an' danderin' after any girls he happens to meet till he's tired of her, and then he'll take up with his fiddlin' or his flowers, or something else, and forget all about her. And I could tell Miss Ellen, if she asked me, that she might as well whistle jigs to a milestone as to try to catch him, which I know she'd like to do, an' I couldn't blame her neither, for he's a nice young man, and a gentleman to the backbone, for all his quare ways ; and a comfortable enough little property, too, as long as he has you and me to look after it."

"Now that puts me in mind," said Terence Drumgoole,



"the evening they came down the mountain to Ballynock and took tea at my little place—as was most sincere of them—it did strike me for certain, that whatever there was between them was full more on Miss Ellen's side nor on his. I was for helping him on to a compliment about her complexion, which is undeniable, and she is as handsome a young lady as I know anywhere ; but what do you think ?—he looked flustered and put about, and turned away without following it up ; while she blushed as red as a peony, and looked down modest and pleased, as was natural, not having seen his face ; but I said nothing more when I observed how the wind blew."

"It's a pity of her, too," said Mr. Maunders, with another great puff of tobacco smoke. "Old Walker, her father, I understand, can no more nor make ends meet, and most like he sent the daughters down here on the chance of husbands, which same neither of 'em 'll get in Mr. Julian, not if he went danglein' for another year : he'd jest forget them the minnit they were gone ; though I don't blame Miss Ellen neither for thinkin' he's courtin' her, for he has such a saireous way of goin' about his flirting, a wiser than she might think he meant it. Now there's the Captain. He's a man that any girl might flirt with ; he flirts with every girl, right and left, and all at the same time, but he'll never make any girl think he's in earnest, no, not till he pops the question and names the day. But here's Mr. Ward and Mr. Julian coming down the lane, and I should be looking afther things in the yard,"—so saying, Mr. Maunders proceeded on his way, the priest accompanying him.

Ellen could at first scarcely believe that the words she heard were spoken either of Julian or herself. Her first feelings were almost of amusement, altogether of incredulity ; then when she could no longer doubt their meaning, indignation and disgust took the place of all other feelings, and the hot blood rushed tingling to her cheeks and brow so violently that the sensation was in itself painful.

"This said of Julian ! this of her father ! this of herself ! Oh, it was only out of their own low sordid hearts that these men judged of others. But then," and with this thought the blood seemed to recede, and, curdling back to her own heart, *make there* a dull, deep pain, "had not Richard Maunders

known Julian all his life? Coarse, vulgar-minded man as the steward was, none could deny his terrible, fearful keensightedness; and had she herself known Julian long enough to be sure that all which was said of him was false? No, on the contrary, she knew that part of what they said *was* true: he *was* desultory in his habits, inconstant in his pursuits, but—but—" and there arose before her mind a long array of pleasant hours passed with Julian in happy interchange of thought, when all that he said had seemed proof to her of the true goodness and nobleness of his mind; and then the evident preference which he had evinced for her from the first, the chivalrous attention to her slightest wish, the numberless little things, too slight almost to be named, and yet which it would have been impossible for her not to perceive, and was it all as Richard Maunders had said—"dangling and——" no, she would not repeat any of his horrible words, not even in her own mind. The charge brought against her father she passed over without a second thought; but that which concerned herself, what had she to say in denial of it? She had never questioned herself as to her feelings until now, for in the pleasant dream of the last weeks she had not thought what was the extent of her regard for Julian. She had believed that he preferred her society to that of any other person, and this consciousness had made her very happy, and now, when brought face to face with the question, to herself she could make but one answer—"I thought he loved me, and—I have loved him—Oh!" and with the same feeling which had prompted her in her childish troubles—the feeling which has prompted all impulsive natures since the world began, she longed that she might flee away—hide herself anywhere from the cruel, deceitful world. Oh! if she could but fly to her own mother's loving bosom, to her own quiet home, be as she was when this year had begun; or that this spring, which, till now, had been the brightest of her life, had never been. "But," and with the thought there came consolation, "perhaps she was foolish to take in such serious sort what these two men had said. What *did they* know? how *could they* know? She would tell Effie all, and would surely obtain from her both sympathy and comfort. Effie might possibly say that the whole affair did not deserve a serious thought." So thinking, her spirit within her rose, and as one who having received a sudden sharp

wound, which is, on examination, found to be a thing of nought, she was preparing to leave her nook, when she again heard voices in the lane, and recognising them at once as the voices of Samuel Ward and Julian Jefferson, she sat, almost cowered down, upon the stone—she could not bear to meet these two just then. She tried not to listen to their conversation, but her sense of hearing seemed sharpened, and it was impossible for her not to catch their words, as they walked slowly, and did not speak in hushed tones.

"Well, Julian," she heard Samuel Ward say, "I felt nearly, I may say quite clear on this subject myself. It was by my sister's desire I questioned thee; women, thou sees, are so uncommonly alert when they think they observe anything in the matrimonial way. But thou mayst be sure that had I believed there was anything serious in the matter I would not have interfered even at her request, and I feel sorry if I have disturbed thy mind."

"Think no more about it, Mr. Ward," replied Julian; "both you and my mother, I am sure, meant kindly, but I hope you will not speak further on the subject, and beg Mrs. Jefferson not to do so either."

"Certainly, thou mayst depend upon me; but I may tell Charlotte, I suppose, that thou hast no intention of applying for the young woman?"

"None," said Julian; and as they passed on he whistled a merry air as if to prevent further conversation.

Ellen listened until their footsteps died away in the distance, then, bowing down her head, she pressed her hands almost convulsively against her forehead as if to ease its throbbing, but tears did not come to her relief.

She need not tell Effie now; she need not ask her sister or anyone else whether they thought that what the priest and the steward had said of her were true. She had heard Julian's own words; she knew they were spoken of herself—that was enough; and no one, not even Effie, not even her own mother, should ever hear of these words, or know the pain which they had inflicted. Least of all should Julian suspect the truth; she would die rather than he should know how much he had been to her. For the future he should be nothing: she would crush all thought of him out of her heart. Poor girl! she be-

lieved that she could do so ; it was her first love. The thrush had returned to the ash tree, and was singing there as merrily as before ; the graceful harebells still filled the air with their perfume, and the golden sunshine was glancing through the ruined arch along the polished ivy leaves as beautifully as ever. But some strange pall had fallen over everything, and nothing seemed to remain of that seventh heaven in which she had but just now moved and breathed.

Almost mechanically she collected the materials of her art, returned each brush and paint to its particular place, tied up her little portfolio, and rose from her seat. As she did so, the first sketch—that which Julian had begged her to give to him, and which she had overlooked when putting up the others—fell wavering to the ground, lighting amongst a bunch of harebells.

She started and shuddered when she saw it, and her first impulse as she took it from the ground was to tear it in fragments. Then, as she looked at its outlines and its colouring—faint mimicry of the pretty scene in which she had spent what seemed to her now the last untroubled hours which she should ever enjoy in this world—two scalding tears fell upon the picture. No, she could not destroy it, nor would she look at it now ; and hastily laying it on the outside of the portfolio she left the ruins, and took her way along the little field path which led to the house. Her eyes were bent upon the ground, and she did not perceive that Captain Jefferson was approaching until he was not more than two yards distant from her, and seeing him so unexpectedly she started, and a brilliant crimson suffused her whole face.

“ When did you return ? ” she asked, endeavouring to regain her composure as she took his offered hand. “ We thought you would never come back.”

“ Surely I wrote to Mrs. Jefferson that I should be home to-day.”

“ Yes, but no one believed you ; you had disappointed us so often.”

“ Ah ! but surely you would not judge me unheard, would you ? indeed, I had no greater wish than to return if it had been possible for me to come sooner. I hope you have all been well during my absence. I saw Julian for a moment ; but neither Mrs. Jefferson nor your sister were visible.”

"They were dressing, I suppose. We are all to spend this evening at the Rectory; shall you be there?"

"Oh, surely; you don't suppose I could deprive myself of the honour and pleasure of attending Mrs. Tatlow's first *soirée*—*conversazione*—what should it be called?"

"I never heard it called anything but a tea-party," said Ellen, "and tea is to be at eight o'clock. What o'clock is it now? I forget," and with a quick, impatient movement she drew her hand across her brow, and then looked up into Captain Jefferson's face with a helpless, pleading expression in her beautiful eyes:

"Gentle and lovely and distressed,  
Such charms might move the sternest breast."

The Captain's breast was not at all stern, warrior though he was, and as he looked at the sweet face, from which the brilliant colour had now quite faded, he thought that in all his wanderings he had never seen so lovely a pallid rose.

"You are ill," he said; and his tone and look were almost tender.

"Oh no," she replied, "I am quite well, but my head felt giddy; I think I have been stooping too long over these sketches."

"You should not trifle with your health even for the sake of your pretty art. Is this really your painting?" he continued, glancing at the little sketch which Ellen held in her hand. "How very pretty!"

"It is a poor little thing," said Ellen.

"I think it beautiful," said the young man, taking the sketch. "How much I should value such a memento of the old place when I am far away."

"If you care for it, Captain Jefferson, you are very welcome to keep it; it is of little value—of none to anyone but myself."

"Many, many thanks," said Julius; and as he appropriated the picture, Ellen felt as if part of her life were wrenched from her, and a shiver passed through her frame.

"Do take my arm," said Captain Jefferson, who saw from the nervous twitching of the slender fingers, and from the changing colour in her face, that there was certainly something amiss with the girl; "do take my arm, and let me beg that you

will not injure your health even for the sake of these charming sketches."

"I do not intend to take any more sketches," said Ellen, as she accepted the offered support.

Whilst they walked thus up the path, Captain Jefferson tried to divert and amuse her mind by talking on all the most cheerful subjects which occurred to him.

He spoke of the gay doings which he had had during the last fortnight, told her of all the great people who were expected soon to arrive at Glarisford, made her promise to go with him on the morrow to see the last hunt of the season, &c., and thought himself wonderfully successful in cheering the spirits of his companion, for Ellen answered gaily, and smiled at his pleasant anecdotes, though all the while it seemed to her as if she were only a looker on—not that happy young girl of two hours ago; but another, who was walking there along the beaten track, with the smooth green pasture-fields spreading away on each side, dotted by their old Italian firs, with the serene blue heaven above, and the sunny summer landscape all around: all was the same as before, except that instead of the glowing, living beauty which had surrounded everything, there was the painful, unreal brightness of a feverish dream.

As Ellen and Captain Jefferson reached the front of the house, Julian came out from the garden, a side-gate to which opened on the gravel sweep. In his hand he held some rare hothouse flowers, arranged in two beautiful bouquets, one of which he offered to Ellen. At first she did not appear to notice either Julian or the flowers; but turning slightly from him, continued to speak to Captain Jefferson on some trifling subject as if it were one of the greatest interest to her.

"I am sorry that these are not more worthy your acceptance," said Julian. "There is not one spray of the *stephanotas* yet in blow; the flower which I found and gave to you yesterday has no successor as yet, but I shall try and have some for you before the ball."

"Oh! pray do not trouble yourself," said Ellen, coldly; and, indeed, her poor young heart did feel very cold when she thought how very much she had prized that one sweet flower, and how tenderly she had placed it and the beautiful rosebud together on her dressing-table.

"But these are pretty, are they not?" said Julian.

"Oh!" replied Ellen, in a careless voice, and as if she now for the first time noticed the bouquets, "you have arranged them very prettily."

"You will take them, one of them, will you not?"

"I have broken my bouquet-holder, thank you; I do not wish to wear any flowers this evening." So saying she turned, and hastening up the steps entered the house.

Julian looked after her, and an expression of deep concern passed over his face.

"I believe there is something wrong in the air this evening," he said, turning to his brother, and, at the same time, he threw the two bunches of flowers in amongst the thick skirting of shrubs, where their beauty faded away unseen.

"Wrong in the air!" repeated Captain Jefferson; "I thought I never felt the air more delightful, or saw the old place looking better."

"Ah! perhaps so," said Julian; then seeing the little sketch of the Abbey in his brother's hand, "Did this drop from Ellen's portfolio?" he continued.

"No; she gave it me. Pretty, is it not? I shall take it with me to India. But come along, Julian, it is time for us to dress; Mrs. Tatlow will never forgive us if we are late for her tea-party."

Julian bit his lip and turned away.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

On entering the large bed-chamber which she and her sister jointly occupied, Ellen found Effie already dressed in evening costume.

"I fear you will be late, Nell," said the latter; "but I have all your things quite ready for you to put on," and she glanced toward the white muslin dress which she had laid upon the bed. It was the same as that which she herself wore, and in which she looked very pretty, although it was made with great simplicity, and only ornamented by blue ribbons in sash and sleeves. "Everything is ready for you, so I shall not be

many minutes dressing you. Mrs. Jefferson has gone downstairs, I think ; but," continued Effie, as she observed her sister's flushed cheeks, and looked anxiously into the eyes which appeared to her unusually glittering, "are you ill, darling ? I fear you have overheated yourself : and you breathe so quickly."

Ellen laughed—it was a hard little laugh. "Silly child," she said, "I am as well as you are ; but the evening is dreadfully warm, and I was talking to Captain Jefferson."

"He is come home then ?"

"Yes ; and I am to go with him to-morrow to see the last of the hunting."

"But you did not hunt before, Nell. You mean that you will ride to the meet."

"No ; I don't care for such stupid riding. I shall really see the hunt to-morrow."

"But, dear Nell, I cannot think it safe for you to do so."

"You're a goose, Effie. Captain Jefferson says I could ride wherever he could ; I think that is enough."

"Perhaps so, dear. But will you not get ready now ; it is more than half-past seven, and Aunt Fanny will not like us to be late."

"It is rather a pleasure to make Aunt Fanny angry : she is so ridiculously particular."

"Dear Nell ! but do sit down, and I shall arrange your hair."

Ellen took a seat before the mirror, and while Effie combed out and plaited her long luxuriant hair, was—if such an expression can with any degree of propriety be used regarding a grown-up young lady—very cross to her gentle sister ; and when Effie, with the greatest care and dexterity was fastening up the plaits, Ellen impatiently shook them all down again, declaring that there never was so awkward a dresser of hair. She wished Effie had not touched it ; no one could arrange her own hair as well as she herself. Then with fingers trembling from haste, she re-arranged the plaits, but not at all so neatly as Effie had previously done, for stray locks came falling from among the thick coils, and ends which should have been fastened in peeped out ; however, as all the tresses were smooth and silky, and every end had the prettiness of a graceful ten-



dril, this did not much matter ; in fact, it would have been very difficult to make the girl's *chevelure* anything but beautiful.

"I shall not wear that," she said, as Effie brought the white muslin dress for her to put on.

"Not this, dear ! surely it is the best to wear to-night."

"No ; I shall wear the pink tarlatan."

"But did you not wish to keep it for the ball at Glarisford Castle ? It is such a nice dress, and will not look so well if you wear it now."

"I do not care ; I shall put it on to-night."

"Do you think Aunt Fanny will like it ?"

"Aunt Fanny's likes or dislikes are nothing to me ; I am sick of blue. Captain Jefferson thinks pink a much prettier colour, and I agree with him."

If Ellen had referred in this way to the taste of any other young gentleman, Effie would have replied with some laughing remonstrance ; as it was, she quietly brought out the pink dress. It was too gay and festive-looking for the occasion, and she knew that Mrs. Tatlow would make some remark upon it which would annoy Ellen ; but what was to be done ? the girl was in no mood to be contradicted, time was flying, and Mrs. Jefferson was waiting.

Ellen was but just arrayed in the gay gossamer robe when a maid came to say that "the mistress wished to know if the young ladies were ready."

"Yes," replied Effie, as gently and lovingly she gave the last few finishing touches to her sister's dress ; "tell Mrs. Jefferson we shall be with her in a moment." Ellen did indeed look lovely ; whether it were that the dress which she wore particularly suited her, or that she were herself more than usually beautiful, Effie could not tell. With a feeling that there had been some little cloud in their generally serene sky, she softly kissed her sister, saying, as she did so, "So, Nell, we are in good time after all."

"After all what ?" asked Ellen, drawing back her head with some haughtiness both in her expression of face and tone of voice.

"Nothing, dear, except that I feared we might have been late," replied Effie, meekly ; and as she went downstairs she felt that the tears were not far from her eyes. She was alto-

gether at a loss to assign any cause for this strange irritable frame of mind.

Ellen was naturally impulsive, even passionate when roused, but having been brought up by good and loving parents in that nurture and admonition which is the root of all real self-control, these tendencies had greatly lessened as she grew up ; or, rather, her naturally strong feelings had been turned into their right and fitting channels. Effie could scarcely remember when there had been anything like a misunderstanding between her and her sister before.

Mrs. Jefferson and the two young men were waiting in the library, so they all set forward at once and reached the Rectory in good time, as the distance was but short. Samuel Ward had gone to town to take tea with his Cousins Sarah and Kitty.

The party at the Rectory was a quiet one, composed chiefly of clerical brethren, whom, from some cause, it had been necessary to invite, and their wives and lady relatives. After tea there was a great deal of music and singing, in which the two Miss Walkers joined. Ellen, although she had a remarkably good voice for her age, generally refused to sing in company ; but this night she both played and sang whenever she was asked. Effie could not understand the change, and, besides, there was a wild warbling melody in her voice which almost frightened her by its pathos. Was it from happiness or unhappiness ?—she could not tell. The notes sounded almost like those of an imprisoned bird calling for the fair land from which it had been torn away ; but then her smiles were as bright, brighter, perhaps, than ever, and she talked and laughed more gaily than was her wont. Smiles and tears are often near akin ; and as Effie saw Captain Jefferson lean over her sister's chair and speak soft, low words, which Ellen answered by bright smiles, she felt almost sure that happiness—some sudden, feverish joy—must have come to her sister. Effie, as well as Samuel Ward and others, had observed what appeared to be the growing attachment between Julian and Ellen—then why this manifest delight at Captain Jefferson's return ; could she be so heartless, so ready to change ?

Puzzled and perplexed, Effie turned away, resolving that she would not watch her sister too closely. There was an elderly

rector sitting beside her, and in conversation with him she tried to change the current of her thoughts.

Julian Jefferson had once or twice during the evening addressed some words to Ellen, but her manner of replying did not encourage him to pursue the conversation. She had been accompanying Effie in a duet, and had returned to a seat at some distance from the piano, when Julian approaching took a vacant chair beside her.

"I have been wishing to tell you," he said, "of a very pretty view of the Abbey—the ruins, I mean—which I observed when I was in the upland pastures this evening. It is quite different from any of the sketches which have been taken before, and I think prettier, for it includes a sweep of the river, and some of the most picturesque of the old trees."

Ellen listened with evident carelessness. "I daresay you will have much pleasure in painting it," she said; "for my part I am tired of sketching: Nature never intended me for an artist."

Julian was almost tempted to ask Ellen then and there what she could mean; and perhaps if he had given way to the sudden impulse it would have been greatly for the happiness of both, but just then his brother joined them.

"There are, I understand, ten curates dying for a repetition of one of your songs—'Come to Glengariff' I think it is," whispered Captain Jefferson to Ellen. "May I lead you back to the piano?"

"I must do all in my power to ameliorate such a sad state of things," said Ellen, smiling, as she took the young man's offered arm.

Julian felt deeply wounded. Ellen's conduct was utterly inexplicable to him. He had hoped that she would at least have told him why she had given to his brother the little sketch which was all but promised to himself—have told him, certainly, that she would paint another for him—that this was given to Julius simply as a memento of his home; but on the contrary, she seemed to have forgotten all about that and everything else connected with the pursuit in which she had before taken so much pleasure. Retiring to the further end of the room, he took a seat beside the rural dean—whom he knew to be a very silent man—and listened to the strange melody of the

girl's voice, as she sang song after song to a knot of admiring young curates. He knew that her singing was not perfect according to the rules laid down by art; but her notes possessed the wild, gushing melody which the cultivated voice not unfrequently loses. There was not much in the words of the songs which she sang, but something in the tone of her voice touched him deeply, indescribably. He must go to her; and he was rising to join the group round the piano when supper was announced, and Mrs. Tatlow desired him to lead in a middle-aged *parsoness* who was near. She was a woman full of energy and philanthropy, and was glad of this opportunity of speaking to Julian about the necessity of establishing more schools, &c., on the Holybrook estate. Her conversation on these subjects never flagged until supper was ended, and then the guests, excepting the family from the Abbey, took their leave.

"How nicely you have got through them all, Fanny," said Mrs. Jefferson, when the last carriage had driven away and the remnant of the party stood around the fire, which had been lighted in the dining-room, for although the days were so lovely, May was still young, and there was a little chill in the night air which made fires not at all disagreeable after sunset.

"Admirably! did she not?" said Mr. Tatlow, laying his hand on his wife's shoulder. "It was very different, I assure you, from the entertainment which these same gentlemen met with during my bachelor days,"—and Mr. Tatlow was seriously thinking of evincing his satisfaction and admiration by kissing his wife, but Fanny drew back a little, not being anxious just then for any such sign of approbation. She was thinking what she should say to Ellen Walker, whose bearing that night she had scanned with no approving eye.

Mr. Tatlow assisted her in opening the subject, although, indeed, she was not one to wait long for an opening, being apt to administer advice or censure both in season and out of season. "We have to thank you, Ellen," Mr. Tatlow had said, addressing his newly-acquired niece, "for much of this evening's entertainment. How delightfully you sang! Had you no pity for those poor young men? they will be all dreaming of you to-night—that is, if they can sleep at all."

"Laughing at her, more probably," said Mrs. Tatlow.

"How could you make yourself so conspicuous, Ellen; you, who know so little of singing, to keep your place at the piano so long. Really it seemed to me very strange. And your dress too; why did you deck yourself as if you were coming to a ball?—perhaps you expected a repetition of the Holybrook entertainment."

"I expected neither entertainment nor amusement," replied Ellen, haughtily; and at the same time she stepped a little backward so that her gauzy drapery just touched the fire. A touch was enough, and it blazed up in a moment. Julian instantly seized a large woollen shawl of Mrs. Jefferson's, which was lying on a chair close by, and with Mr. Tatlow's help the flame was extinguished without injury either to life or limb, but with sore injury to the pink tarlatan. Effie, who the moment she saw the danger, sprang forward to Ellen's assistance, was caught and detained by Captain Jefferson's strong arm until all peril was past. "Why endanger your life unnecessarily," he said, smiling, as he released her. "Your dress is quite as inflammable, perhaps more so, than your sister's, and if it were to catch fire would burn down the whole house."

As all who were present gathered round Ellen with expressions of sympathy and concern, she stood perfectly unmoved.

She had uttered no scream—did not even appear to be alarmed; only as Julius examined the long brown marks upon the bright silk slip she said, with a quiet smile, "That is the end of the pink lady for the Glarisford ball."

"No, please goodness," said Julius, "not as long as we have Mrs. Johnston at hand to remedy deficiencies."

"You are very much mistaken if you suppose Mrs. Johnston would mend an injured dress," said Mrs. Tatlow; "particularly now when she is so busy."

"You don't know what friends Mrs. Johnston and I are," said Julius: "she would do anything for me."

Mrs. Tatlow looked at the Captain sternly; this speech of his appeared to her to approach rather nearly to impertinence. What had he to do with young ladies' dresses?

"The dress you wore at my marriage would do admirably for the ball," she said, turning to Ellen; "but I suppose it is not fit to be seen after that wild night in the mill."

"Certainly," said Ellen, glancing at Julius with a smile, "the wild night at the mill finished it."

"Perhaps your father, who has to pay for all these things, may think differently; but I suppose it does not trouble you much to wear out an expensive dress in one night."

"Not the least, Aunt Fanny; that was the reason I put my skirt into the fire at the risk of burning myself to death."

"Nell, dear," said Effie, in a very low but appealing voice. "See!" she continued, turning to Mrs. Tatlow, "it really is not very much injured; a few yards of tarlatan and one breadth of silk will, I think, make all right again, and it will be as good as ever for the ball."

"Really, after we have had such a narrow escape of having the whole house burnt, and perhaps of losing our lives also, it does not seem to me a very fitting time for talking about balls," said Mrs. Tatlow.

Effie had only wished to change the conversation, but felt rather sinful now.

"See if the little carriage has come for me and the girls, Julian, my dear," said Mrs. Jefferson. "If we had been as prudent as others, and not kept the horse and man waiting, Ellen's dress might have escaped, and we should have got home quietly after our pleasant evening. But Fanny is quite right: we should not be thinking about the dress when the dear girl has escaped injury herself."

"Yes," said Mr. Tatlow; "Fanny is quite right—always right."

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## CHAPTER XXII.

"So thou art for riding to-day, Ellen," said Samuel Ward on the following morning as he entered the breakfast-room. "I have been looking at Julius's beautiful horses, and the groom told me he had orders to put the side-saddle on one of them for thee."

"Yes; I am going to see the last of the hunting to-day."

"Thou art a good rider I know; but the mare looks somewhat frolicsome, and I understand the country through which it is expected to pursue the poor fox is rather a dangerous one."

"I am not at all afraid," said Ellen; "I am sure Captain Jefferson will take care of me."

"Yes; but if thy horse were falling, Julius could scarcely prevent the accident."

"You will, I suppose, only go to the meet, my dear, as you did before?" said Mrs. Jefferson, "and then come home quietly with Julian."

Julian looked up from the newspaper which he was reading: "If you wish to do so, you know that I shall be most happy to attend you," he said.

"Thank you," replied Ellen; "you are very kind. But I wish to have some real riding for once; Captain Jefferson says there is no danger."

"Not the least," said the young officer, as he entered the room; "you can ride as well as anyone in the field. The horses are being saddled; can you soon be ready?"

"Yes, in a few moments," replied Ellen; and she left the room, Effie following to assist her in dressing.

"Julius, my dear, you should not have persuaded Ellen to go to this hunting to-day," said Mrs. Jefferson; "I feel very uneasy about it."

"Why mother? Ellen is the best horsewoman I ever met, and really I think a smart ride will do her all the good in the world. This sketching, at which she has been so much engaged, is not at all fit for a young girl like her. She told me it made her feel quite ill, so I prescribed hunting, and she promised to give up the fine arts for the present. You'll see what an excellent doctor I shall prove in her case."

"I had not heard Ellen complain during your absence," Mrs. Jefferson replied; and hospitable woman as she was, she heartily wished that Ellen was at home with her own natural guardians. She had spoken to her brother before breakfast relative to his interview with Julian; but he had, she thought, been neither agreeable nor explicit on the subject: he had looked innocent, although she believed he knew all about it—given her some instance of their father's sagacity; but told her nothing, except that there was no probability that Julian would ask Effie to remain at the Abbey.

But now it appeared to Mrs. Jefferson that Julius, as well as Julian, preferred the younger to the elder sister, and then how

was it to end? She could only wish she had never invited the girls to stay at her house.

Julian had laid down the *Times*, and walking to the window he looked out upon the sunny slopes and rugged summits of Lugderrig and Knockduff. Ellen and he had arranged a sketching excursion for that very day, and he had given up other engagements for this reason; and although since Captain Jefferson's return he had not supposed the scheme would have been carried out, yet surely Ellen should have said something in explanation or apology. Was she utterly thoughtless as well as heartless; "Then," he thought, with a deep sigh—"All my bright visions of happiness have been only visions."

We shall not follow his thoughts: they never were known to any human being. But this is only a trite aphorism—there are depths in every human heart known only to itself and its Creator.

As Julian left the room, Mrs. Jefferson observed the sad expression of the face, which, from childhood, she had been accustomed to scan. Grieved to the heart as she felt, she knew that she was powerless to comfort him. She saw him take his lonely way toward the mountains; and when he returned that evening he looked ten, aye, twenty years older. This was the only way in which anyone could perceive that he had suffered or was suffering. His manner was gentle and courteous as always—in this he never changed.

Ellen went with Captain Jefferson to the hunt, and no accident occurred, although she almost frightened her fearless companion by the daring manner in which she rode; and she rendered herself as conspicuous amongst the gay equestrians as on the preceding evening amongst the sober clergymen.

Julius did not understand how the girl had "come out" to such an extent during the fortnight of his absence; and although he could not but admire her courage and the grace with which she rode, and was by no means indifferent to the pleasure of having such a beautiful and attractive creature as his companion in the field, was yet well pleased when the sport was over, and he and Ellen were riding quietly home to Holybrook.

"We shall be home by six o'clock after all," said Captain Jefferson, as he and his companion allowed the tired horses to walk up the long slope of Iveagh hill. Then as he looked at



Ellen he perceived that the animation and brilliancy which had distinguished her during the day were changed for an air of languor and weariness: the brightness had faded from both eye and cheek, and the expression of her countenance was almost one of pain, as leaning a little forward on her saddle she looked listlessly up the narrow road along which they were riding.

"You have overtaxed your strength I fear," said Julius; "I was wrong to allow you to ride so far."

"Oh, no! I am not at all fatigued," replied Ellen; "riding never tires me. I wish we had four or five hours of riding still before us;" and she raised herself in the saddle, while a bright flush suffused her cheeks. "I was only thinking—people often look tired when they think. How strange it was that I was not burnt to death last night; I thought that was the usual course when dresses caught fire."

"Dear Miss Walker!" exclaimed Captain Jefferson, "do not speak thus, or allow your mind to dwell on such a painful subject; and, in truth, there was no danger when help was so near at hand. Julian did the best thing which anyone could have done under the circumstances."

Ellen shuddered; then seeing her companion's eyes were fixed on her she smiled gaily. "My poor pink dress! you must at least allow me to mourn its fate."

"Yes, it has certainly suffered severely; but that is a very remediable misfortune."

"Yes; Effie has promised to make it as good as new for me."

"Notwithstanding Mrs. Tatlow's denunciations?"

"Oh! Effie did not mind that; she never quarrels with Aunt Fanny—I always do. But Effie is very good; I wish I were half as good—nothing makes her angry or disturbs her mind."

"No, I believe not. She is as steadfast and immoveable as a rock; I sometimes think she is as cold."

"Effie! oh no! How can you speak so of Effie? You cannot know her; she is so good, so warm-hearted. I never knew anyone before who did not like Effie."

"But did you ever know anyone whom Effie did not like? No matter; tell me about your dress. Surely you will not wear

that dress again ; you should keep it as a memento of Mrs. Tatlow's first tea-party."

"Yes, if Mrs. Tatlow would give me one to replace it. Fancy Aunt Fanny giving anyone a ball dress !"

"You remember our wager, and that I lost ?"

"Yes."

"And you are prepared to abide by the consequences ?"

"Oh, surely !"

Just then a turn in the road brought the riders in sight of the cottage in which Christie Ryan had died, and in which his family still resided.

Effie Walker stood at the door. She had been sent by Mrs. Jefferson to visit Peg, who was still confined to her bed ; no remedies which Dr. Grant had given her, seeming in any way to relieve the complaint from which she suffered. During her illness, her eldest child, not having received any care from its grandmother, had pined away and died, and the wretched little infant was sure soon to follow its brother from this world of sorrows.

As the riders came up, Effie advanced with a bright smile on her face.

"I am so glad to see you safe home, dear Nell," she said ; "we have all been very uneasy about you."

"Oh ! I have got on beautifully ; we had a delightful day."

Effie looked up into her sister's face. She knew every expression of that face, and she knew the tones of the voice too ; neither seemed to her now to tell of much delight. The face had a weary look, and the voice had the same peculiar ring which she had observed on the preceding evening.

"Why, Effie," said Ellen, "you look at me as if you thought I were hiding some fearful accident ; indeed, I have not been in any greater peril than if I had been sitting in the Abbey drawing-room all day. Why do you not inquire as to Captain Jefferson's safety ?"

"Perhaps on the supposition that 'nought was never in danger,'" said Julius, looking down into the soft blue eyes.

The soft blue eyes were lowered as Effie replied, "I never heard that saying before, so I did not think it. I would not assume the possibility of your meeting an accident in such play-work as hunting must seem to you."

"That means something very like what I said," continued the young man, with a smile.

"Effie shook her head. "If I am to be misunderstood," she said, playfully, patting the horse's neck, "I must bid you good-bye. No, no," she continued, as she saw that Julius was about to dismount to lead his horse by her side instead of riding; "I am going back to the Abbey by the field path. I shall be there perhaps before you, and set Mrs. Jefferson's mind at rest."

"Ah! *she* has been uneasy then? anxious as to the safety of both riders, has she not?"

"Oh, surely; good-bye."

Captain Jefferson looked after Effie's retreating figure, then turning to Ellen he said, "I never met so incomprehensible a being as your sister. Outwardly she is all smiles and softness; and yet I sometimes doubt whether she have a heart at all. If she be possessed of such a thing, she has an unlimited power of hardening it."

Ellen looked at her companion wonderingly. "How is it that you mistake Effie so much; surely she said nothing now to displease you. It was only natural for her to be uneasy about my safety; she is always anxious and timid when she fancies that anyone she loves or cares for at all is in the least danger."

"Cold comfort," muttered Captain Jefferson; then raising his voice, "Oh, yes; your sister was quite right, as I suppose she always is."

Julius was not mistaken in saying that Effie's smiles and bright looks were, just then at least, very superficial, for she bore a troubled heart within her breast on this sweet May evening as she walked down Iveagh hill. On each side of the little path the sheep were cropping the short thick grass, lying in satisfied rumination, or standing at gaze till she passed by. It was a gently sloping, grassy hill, and she would have run down it had she been in gayer mood; but her steps were lingering, and her face full of thought, as she walked slowly on, and leaving the open field, entered the planting, where the freshly-opened tassels of the larch trees filled the air with their aromatic perfume, and where beneath the sparse foliage of the budding groves was spread that beauteous carpetting which

Nature, in the lovely spring-time, weaves so cunningly with delicate leaves, starry flowers, and tender emerald grass.

The pathway led along the bank of a little sparkling stream—the same which flowed down Iveagh hill; and although its course was not so rapid as on the mountain side, it still babbled and leaped merrily along small pebbly reaches, and over obstructing stones, in haste to join itself to the larger stream.

"They are safe, and will not want me home," said Effie to herself as she stopped, and leaning against a larch tree which overhung the water looked into the crystal brook, and listened to its soft rippling. "Oh! if I only knew—if I only could be sure of Ellen's happiness; but then poor Julian! I know he loves her, and I was sure she loved him too, nor could he have thought otherwise, and I do not think she would have willingly deceived him; but, poor Nell, she is so young—so young even for her years, and so thoughtless; and she did not know her own heart, not till *he* returned and spoke to her. He must have spoken to her yesterday evening, or there would not have been this sudden change in her manner; and yet, if so, why is she not happier? Does she know that she has not acted well towards Julian? or does she too, feel through all that Julius is not to be trusted? I do not think she does. Poor Nelly! I wish she thought more. My beautiful Nelly! she could not school her heart as I have schooled mine—her nature is not like mine; and, after all, have I schooled my heart? I don't know; I cannot quite while he speaks to me with those great bright eyes of his, although I know their language is the same to many others, and when he is gone I do believe that I can forget him; but can she? Oh! I have heard such terrible stories of how these gay young officers will, simply for the amusement of the passing moment, gain a girl's whole affections, and then leave her without even thinking themselves to blame. But perhaps he does really love her; and how can I speak to her or warn her when my own heart tells me that if I trusted him, and believed that he loved me, I could go to the ends of the earth for his sake."

So Effie Walker pondered, reasoning in a circle and coming to no satisfactory conclusion, the only settled feeling in her mind being—"Oh! how I wish mamma were here, or even Aunt Margaret."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

WHILST Effie Walker was thus standing beside the little stream buried in painful thought, Julian Jefferson came down Iveagh Hill, and entered the plantation by the same path which she herself had come.

He met her with a smiling face, and a few pleasant words of greeting, but he looked pale and weary. "I am glad that I shall not be the last to reach home," he said, as they walked on together. "We are both late, but I am selfish enough to be pleased that I have a companion in misfortune. I think I saw Julius and your sister riding home, not long since."

"Yes, they have returned, and Ellen is quite safe. I need not have been uneasy on her account; she is such a good rider."

"Yes, she is an excellent rider, and I am sure they must have had a delightful day."

"She told me that they had."

A look of pain passed over Julian's face.

"I have been over Knockduff," he said, "and paid a visit also to our friend, Mr. Drumgoole."

"What a very long walk, and I see you have found some heath, already in blow. How pretty it is."

"Very pretty," said the young man, as he gave Effie a spray of the delicate pink flower which he held in his hand; "it is not heath, however, but it's cousin german, *Andromeda*. Have you never seen it before? It is now in full bloom in the boggy land on the shoulder of Knockduff. I brought these sprays thinking that perhaps you or your sister would like to see them. Or have we any hope of tempting you to spend another day on the mountains?"

"No, I fear not; we must soon return to Rose Cottage. Aunt Margaret and grandpapa are soon to be home."

"But could they not spare you for a little longer?"

"Thanks; but you know there is this very important Ball at the Castle for which we shall have to prepare."

"Ah! I suppose, so," replied Julian; and as if wishing to change a painful subject, he asked—"Can you guess who I had for a companion from Ballynock to Iveagh?"

I do not know the inhabitants well enough to guess so."

Oh, you are acquainted with my companion. It was none other than Peter Ryan, and really you would have been surprised had you seen how companionable he made himself, and amiable also."

Indeed! if he did prove himself so I should feel surprised," said Effie. "I was delighted that he was not at home. I just now called to see his wife."

I have got a house for him in Ballynock at last," said Peter, "and he has promised to go there soon; promised to turn over a new leaf, and be a respectable member of the community for the remainder of his life, on condition that I allow him to move his furniture from his present dwelling."

His terms seem moderate," said Effie, smiling.

Very," replied Julian. "Of course I have not a particle to say in Peter's promises, but I think Drumgoole will do as he can, to keep him out of mischief; and it's only fair to give the fellow a chance. How is that poor little wife of his?"

Not nearly well, I think, and she has a strange look. Her mind is a little unsettled, which is no wonder. I am sure if I had much of old Nance's company, my mind would become unsettled. Perhaps the change of air will be of use to her. When are they to move?"

Peter says he will go on the 18th—that will be Wednesday."

The day after the Ball?"

Yes," replied Julian, "and I have promised the cart, or so I hope all will be accomplished favourably. There is your mother waiting for us on the steps, with what is very unusual, a cloud on her brow. Are we very late, mother?"

continued, as he and Effie crossed the gravel sweep in front of the Abbey.

Jo, my dear. It doesn't matter about waiting tea. I have a nice dinner for the hunters, but neither of them would eat it. There was an invitation waiting for Julius to dine at the castle, and he is gone up to dress himself, and when he gets down he won't have his dinner. Ellen wouldn't either, and Samuel's the same sort, too: and I thought I'd come out and look if I see you coming, to cheer me up a little."

"Well, mother, here we are," said Julian, laying his hand on Mrs. Jefferson's shoulder, and looking affectionately into her face; but the result of this seemed anything but cheering, for the good woman's eyes filled with tears as she gazed anxiously at her step-son. She, however, only said—

"You have not dined either, I am sure, my poor boy."

"No, mother. Where should I dine on the mountains!"

"Come in then, dears; come in at once, and I'll order some nice little chops or cutlets, and we'll all try to be comfortable if we can: but I do think there must be something wrong about the evening. I could almost say that Samuel himself was cross."

Captain Jefferson had, as his mother said, gone up to his room to dress himself suitably for dining at Glarisford Castle, an invitation from the Marquis having come rather opportunely, considering that he, as well as other members of the household, was a little out of humour.

He had returned home the day before, hoping, and rather expecting, that Effie Walker might have pined a little during his absence. He could not tell why the gentle quiet girl was so much to him; he, who was flattered, and admired by ladies who were his superiors in rank, and certainly Effie's superiors, both in beauty and accomplishments. He could not tell why it should be so, but so it was; and to see her again he had returned home, leaving the scenes of gaiety and amusement, which were most congenial to him, but returned, only to find Effie not pining, but smiling, and apparently quite happy without him. She was as tranquil, as impassive, and as sunny as ever.

"I shall soon be going away for good and all," he said to himself, as he raised his hands to arrange his shirt collar, "so it doesn't signify."

Then as he looked down to fasten the handsome stud at his wrist, he caught sight of Effie and Julian as they came towards the house. His face flushed for a moment: was it jealousy which he felt? No; he might have answered that question quite clearly and satisfactorily. He was not jealous of his brother, nor had he ever been. It was not alone because of the strong attachment subsisting between the twin brothers, but there never had been any cause for rivalry; their

interests had never clashed ; least of all were they likely to be rivals in ladies' love. Of this the handsome soldier brother had no apprehension ; in fact, it scarcely occurred to him that Julian was likely to have cares, or interests, beyond the studies and pursuits to which he had always been addicted ; but what *did* suddenly strike Captain Jefferson at this moment of fastening his wrist stud was, " Could the still waters of Effie's heart be stirred by jealousy, or was she proof against all the feelings common to humanity ? He would try at least. It might be that he had been too devoted, he had shown his admiration too plainly, and the result had been that she had received it as quietly as if it had been a thing of everyday occurrence that a handsome—he glanced at the mirror before him—a remarkably handsome young officer—the admired of all admirers—of a very old, if not a very wealthy family—whose society was welcomed by the best in the land,—a hero, too, for had he not won his rank and his laurels, sword in hand, by his own bravery, in many a fiercely foughten field ?—that such an one should be led captive by a simple, quiet, not beautiful nor very accomplished girl, the daughter of a corn-merchant in a country town ! Ellen *was* beautiful, no one could doubt that—so beautiful, indeed, that her loveliness alone might justify any man in raising her to the highest ranks in society ; besides, she possessed high spirits, and was much more accessible to flirtation than her sister. He would transfer his attentions from Effie to her at once, and decidedly ; perhaps he might be able to transfer his affection to her as well. This felt a little dreary, but he would try. In any case, if Effie had the least love for him such a course would excite her jealousy. He did not suppose that she would exhibit that feeling in any unamiable way. It would be enough if he could move her from her provoking placidity, cause her to look a little sorrowful—to pine a little. If she still remained unmoved, he would conclude that she either had no heart, or had left it in the keeping of some of her father's clerks or apprentices, before she had come to Glarisford, and he would allow her to let it remain with such clerk or apprentice."

Thus thinking, he completed his toilet, by putting on the easy lounging coat which he generally wore when at home, instead of the dress coat which his servant had laid ready for



him, and which he would have worn had he gone to dine at the Castle; wrote a few lines of apology to the Marquis of Glarisford, despatched them by a groom, and then descended to the dining-room, where the rest of the family were just sitting down to a meal half dinner half tea, but altogether excellent, which Mrs. Jefferson had had hastily prepared.

"My dear Julius!" that lady exclaimed, as he entered the room, "I thought you were half way to Glarisford before now. Will not you be late for dinner?"

"I mean to dine with you, mother," said the young man, as he took a seat beside Ellen Walker. "Do you think I am tired of being at home already?"

"I hope not, dear: for my part I am never so happy as when I have you both at home with me. But I am afraid the Marquis will think it strange; he will be disappointed."

"I don't know about that," said Captain Jefferson gaily; "however, I think the Marquis is quite as well able to bear a slight disappointment as I am to bear a much greater one."

Then, with the soft serious voice which he always had at his command, he turned to Ellen, and said, "I do not think that for the sake of Lord Glarisford, or any other man, I should make one of the happiest days of my life terminate by a self-imposed banishment."

Effie heard the soft tones, and saw the look which accompanied them, and so did Julian, and both felt all that could have been desired by either of the others. Not that their feelings were apparent externally, and they were both engaged in the duties of the table, Effie handing a cup of tea to Samuel Ward, and Julian cutting some slices from the breast of a cold fowl.

"I suppose thou hadst a very pleasant day also, Julian," said Samuel Ward, with what was for him, some asperity. "Didst thou go out to sketch?"

"No, sir, I did not sketch to-day," replied Julian.

"Ah, thou excused thyself yesterday when I asked thee to go with me to Glarisford to-day, by saying that thou hadst other engagements,—intended to go out sketching, I think thou said. But I have frequently before found thee not too particular about keeping thy appointments."

"Indeed I am very sorry," said the young man. "I did

forget that you asked me to accompany you. But can we not go to-morrow?"

"I have received letters calculated to hasten my return home. I may have to go to-morrow."

"My dear Samuel!" exclaimed Mrs. Jefferson, "Do you really think of going? You told me you had no intention of doing so: though, indeed, I think it might be better if you did—not to remain, of course, but just for a day or two, while you settle Betty. It would be so awkward if she left you."

After Mrs. Jefferson had said this she felt really alarmed, for if her brother ever had looked "cross," he did so now. He took two uncommonly large mouthfuls of tea, helped himself to a slice of bread and butter, laid it on his plate, and cut it into long strips so emphatically, that Mrs. Jefferson plainly perceived that he was ruffled, although he did not say a word in reply to her recommendation.

The temper of Samuel Ward was as quiet, and amiable, as is at all common among human beings; but one would say a man was more than human if he never, under any provocation, showed frailty of temper. And this day he had been more than annoyed by a letter which he had received informing him that his own establishment near Dublin was all at "sixes and sevens,"—that Betty, his old housekeeper, was quarrelling with all the other old servants, including her husband, a much enduring man for whom his master always felt sincere sympathy.

The letter was from Richard Fletcher, the young relative in whose charge he generally left all his affairs during his long visits to Holybrook, or his absences elsewhere, and it requested that he would return home as soon as possible, to set his house in order. To this request Samuel Ward had firmly resolved not to accede. Betty's temper was never of the best, but it was usual for it to come to the boiling point occasionally, after which it generally worked itself off in time, but it was a highly objectionable thing to be in her power during this time; a thing he would not submit to, let his sister recommend it never so strongly. Richard Fletcher might arrange matters as well as he could, and if the civil war did terminate in Betty's departure, why then—but such a consummation was too much to hope for.

He had come to Holybrook with the intention of staying till the end of 5th month—so he always designated the merry month of May—and he had a particular objection to disarrange his plans; but to face his ancient servant in the day of her wrath, was the most objectionable thing anyone could propose to him. He took another large mouthful of tea, and sent the empty cup to his sister, accompanying it with a look of stern determination.

“Julian, my dear,” said Mrs. Jefferson, when she had replenished the cup, “I wish you’d open that window wider. Do you observe how oppressive this evening seems. I really think there is something wrong in the air,” she continued, as she glanced first at her brother, and then to the other side of the table, where Captain Jefferson and Ellen were engaged in a low-toned but animated conversation—not to say flirtation, and the good woman felt that everything was going wrong,—felt more than ever anxious that her two young visitors were gone, and rather displeased, too, with Margaret Grey, who had prolonged her absence, so that they could not yet return to Rose Cottage.

There are times when everything around us appears to assume a sombre aspect, even without our being able to assign any definite cause for such a state of things. It may be something in the air, or something on the earth; we know not half the influences which affect our sensitive bodies, or still more sensitive minds. Certainly on this May evening such a gloom seemed to pervade the generally cheerful dining room of Holybrook Abbey, and although two of the company appeared animated enough, all were more or less disturbed in mind. The evening, although dry and balmy, was gloomy for the time of year. The sky had been gradually covered by a thick canopy of leaden-coloured clouds, not lowering nor thunderous in their appearance, but dark and solemn, nevertheless.

Julian opened the window, as he had been requested, and looked out over the quiet landscape, and up to the high vault of leaden clouds, which now, as the sun descended, were changing to hues of violet, more or less deep.

“Is it going to rain, or to thunder, or what?” asked Mrs. Jefferson.

"No, it is a beautiful sky, and although so sombre, well worth studying," said Julian; and as he spoke he turned toward Ellen, his first impulse being to call her to look at, and admire with him, the deep violet-coloured clouds which would be all edged with gold as soon as the sun sank into the streak of clear sky which opened along the horizon. But Ellen was listening to something which Captain Jefferson said, and with a sigh Julian turned again to the window, and looking up wistfully to the heavens, he said—

"The clouds are dark indeed, but soon they will catch all the glorious hues of sunset."

"Ah! come here, my dear, and finish your tea," said Mrs. Jefferson, with a little shudder, for which even to herself she could assign no reason, except that something in the young man's look distressed her. She drew his chair closer to herself, filled his cup with fresh strong tea, and helped him to a dainty little cutlet.

"Sit down, dear, and finish your tea."

Julian did as he was desired, sat down, and drank the tea, but to his mother's sorrow left the cutlet untasted.

"Do take it," she said, almost pleadingly, "indeed, you have fasted too long."

"Thanks, dear mother; but I have already had both dinner and tea. I must go now and visit my flowers. I had not time to attend to them yesterday evening, and I fear they are suffering."

In these evening visits to the conservatories both the girls had generally accompanied Julian. Ellen had always done so, when not otherwise engaged, for she loved all flowers, and particularly delighted in the brilliant and beautiful exotics which Julian tended so carefully.

As he rose to leave the room he heard Ellen say, "Did you find that lovely sprig of heath on Iveagh Hill, Effie?"

"No," replied Effie, taking the sprig from her bosom; "nor is it a heath: it is even more delicately beautiful. What did you say its name was?" she continued, addressing Julian.

"Andromeda," he replied; "it is a heathwort, but not a heath: I found it in some boggy ground on the lowest shoulder of Knockduff. I wish you could see it, as it grows there: its delicate pink sprays contrast so beautifully with the dark

brown surroundings of bog, and heather, and the rich green of the damp mosses and curling bracken. You are fond of flowers," he continued, turning to Ellen, who was examining the sprig, "you should see the andromeda blooming in its native soil: it would well repay you for another visit to the mountains."

"Oh I have no time for mountain climbing now," said Ellen, in a tone which she meant to be gay. "You forget that the Ball at Glarisford Castle is so near."

"No, I do not forget. I have been watching the stephanotas: in a week there will be many flowers in blow, and I hope that both you and your sister will wear it in your hair at the Ball."

"It is for a few sprigs of the pretty little sollya I shall beg," said Effie; "its bright blue will match my ribbons so nicely."

"Be it so," said Julian, "any flowers I have are at your disposal."

"But," he continued, again addressing Ellen, "might we not all arrange to go to Knockduff to-morrow?"

A quick blush rose to Ellen's cheeks: she would have liked nothing better than another ramble on the mountains, and there was nothing to prevent her from going, but as she looked up she saw that Samuel Ward's eyes were fixed upon her, with what she fancied was a look full of disapprobation. The good man was, in reality, neither thinking of, nor looking at her, although perhaps she came within the range of his vision: his mental eye was fixed far beyond, and with troubled gaze surveyed the civil war which was raging in his own comfortable house near Dublin. But Ellen remembering the words which she had only yesterday heard him utter, thought the unusually stern glance was all for her, and it seemed to convey both reproof and warning. She recollected, too, that on the mountains she might meet Mr. Drumgoole, and all her feelings of resentment and wounded pride rose afresh. She could not repress the vivid blush which overspread cheek and brow, but she replied coldly—

"No, there is not time, and such long walks are wearisome;" and as she spoke she felt that she had told two untruths—felt, too, in the strange excitement of her mind, that it did *not* trouble her much that she had done so.

"You did not tell me that you had been fatigued," said Julian, "I am very sorry."

"We mountaineers are in danger of forgetting how fatiguing long walks may be to those who are not accustomed to them," said Captain Jefferson; "for the next few days you must allow me to be master of the ceremonies. I shall forbid long walks as well as stooping over pretty sketches. Let me see, what shall we do to-morrow? Ah!—but I had forgotten—I have very particular business in Glarisford to-morrow."

"This little flower is the loveliest shade of pink," said Ellen, as she smilingly touched the spray of andromeda.

"Too pale," said Captain Jefferson, as with the air of a connoisseur he held his head a little to one side; then raising the sprig towards Ellen's cheek, he continued, with a smile, "too faint and pale beside those rival roses."

Julian did not wait to listen to their further conversation; quietly leaving the room, he went out into the pleasure-grounds, taking his way towards the conservatories; but when, half-an-hour afterwards, Mrs. Jefferson with a troubled spirit went out in search of him, he was not there. A gardener who was watering some plants on the terrace, said he had not seen Mr. Julian that day.

Mrs. Jefferson feeling nervous, and, as she said herself, "quite upset," was alarmed to find that he had neglected his usual pursuits, and although not naturally imaginative, began to fancy strange things as to what might have become of her stepson, the most prominent being, that he might wander away among the mountains and fall over a precipice. He had not, however, gone farther than the upper end of the gardens, where the good lady, panting both from uneasiness of mind and from the rather steep ascent, at last found him gazing at the sun, which, as he had foretold, was setting in floods of splendour, gilding the dark clouds even to the zenith.

"My dear boy!" she said, putting her arm within his. He looked down affectionately into the troubled face. "I am sure your brother meant nothing less, than to blame you or hurt your feelings," she continued, her eyes filling with tears, "but you know he has not been here, and has no idea."

"I know it! I know it, mother! He has no idea—how could he. I trust he never may. But what he said was

true, perfectly true. I have only wearied when I tried to please. But no matter. I have been endeavouring to think how little all these things do really signify. It will all soon be past. Look at that scene before us. The darkest clouds take the most glorious hues at sunset. Perhaps it will be so with lives which have seemed all dark till the sunset came. Should it prove bright, what matters all that has gone before? But you are out of breath, mother. Why did you not call me to help you up the steep walks?"

"The walk is steep, my dear; but it's not that, only—" and Mrs. Jefferson stopped short. Her impulse was, then and there, soundly to scold the absent Ellen, yet her woman's wit showing her that this would be anything but a prudent course, she restrained herself; blaming the girl she knew would only make Julian love her more: like a true knight, his spirit would rise in arms to defend the victim. But to think—to think of her boy, her clever boy, so like his father, and whose talents raised him even above those of his own rank,—her poet, who for anything she knew, might be Laureate some day, and fit to match himself with the proudest lady in the land—speaking as if he had been foolish, or presumptuous, in trying to please that little chit, who, though she certainly had a pretty face, had not much else to recommend her—at least so Mrs. Jefferson thought just then; the thought also crossed her mind, and brought with it some solacement, that if Ellen were trying to gain the Captain's affections she would be sorely disappointed.

This was not an amiable frame of mind, and the generally amiable and very kind-hearted lady knew it was not.

"Only—?" said Julian, repeating her last word interrogatively. "You feel chilly. The dew is beginning to fall."

"Oh, no, no, dear; I don't care about the dew." And then, Mrs. Jefferson took her son's hand, and while she gently stroked his long thin fingers, she burst into tears.

He led her to an arbour close by, and seating himself beside her, drew her to him tenderly. "My dearest mother, do not trouble yourself in this way. Indeed, I believe it will be all well in the end."

"Don't talk of the end, and of dark clouds and sunsets;

don't, like a dear boy." She said at length, "Your dear father said something like that to me not long—" She was going to say—"not long before he died," but she checked herself. "My dear child!" she went on to say, "my greatest pleasure now is to see you and Julius happy, and I can't bear to think that you are fretting, and that your brother is the cause—though I'm sure he doesn't know. Now don't fret; it may all come right yet." Then with an effort, "My dear! do you really love the girl—Ellen, I mean?"

"I do love her with my whole heart."

Mrs. Jefferson could not help sighing; it seemed to her such a pity, but her son's happiness was really her first consideration, and she said, "Then tell her so, speak to her at once; speaking out plainly makes sometimes all the difference with a girl. And as for your brother flirting with her, you know he flirts with everyone, poor boy. He wouldn't do it if I told him not, if he had the least idea that it troubled you. Let me tell him."

"No, mother, do not, I beg of you; promise me that you will not. You would only make me more miserable by doing so; and besides, it would be of no use. My brother admires Ellen, I know. Who could do otherwise?"

Mrs. Jefferson was strongly tempted to say that she was capable of a contrary feeling, but she held her peace, and Julian continued—

"But it is not that, it is the sudden change in—in Ellen herself, which leaves me no room for hope. Julius must have gained her regard, even before he went away; he must see that now, and seeing it, do you suppose he will not value such a priceless gift?"

"I don't know whether he will or not, I am sure," said Mrs. Jefferson, gloomily; "but I don't think he cares much about the matter at present. I've seen him flirt as much, or more, with twenty pretty girls; and if you're fond of Ellen, and think that she is the only person to make you happy, I really recommend you to speak to her at once."

"It would be of no use. I see that she prefers my brother. She seemed—yes, she did seem to like me a little, while he was not here; when he returned, all was changed. But I do not blame her, mother, indeed I do not; not even in thought."



"I can't see just as you do," said Mrs. Jefferson ; and fearing that she might commit herself further, she rose from her seat, and kissing Julian's forehead, said, " Well, well, my dear boy, maybe we had better leave the subject for this evening. The sun has set, and the dew is, as you say, falling, and I'm sure you ought to go to bed early and get a good night's rest, after all the walking you have had to-day."

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#### CHAPTER XXIV.

ELLEN WALKER's first thought when she awoke on the following morning was that she had flirted a little too much with the handsome Captain. Could he have been in earnest in all the pretty things he had said to her, and was it really the case that she had agreed to his procuring, at his own expense, a pink silk dress in which she was to appear at the approaching ball ! The talk about it had begun in jest, but was it not she that had begun it, and however it had begun it had ended in downright earnest. Captain Jefferson was to buy her a dress, and she was to wear it. What would her mother say ? or Margaret, or Effie ; or, above all, Mrs. Tatlow ?—but with the thought of Mrs. Tatlow came the old reckless feeling over her mind. It would be such fun to see how Aunt Fanny would look. And Ellen laughed as she combed out her long brown hair, and looked at the reflection of her own beautiful face in the mirror. Still, as she went downstairs she almost resolved that she would tell Captain Jefferson that he must not buy the dress for her, she would make the old one do.

Mrs. Tatlow had been experiencing some compunction, for her rather too severe conduct to Ellen, on the night of the clerical party. After all, though the niece had been more giddy in her deportment than the sober aunt thought was at all becoming, and had attired herself in a manner which was not suitable to the occasion, still she certainly had not burned her dress intentionally ; the accident might have terminated seriously, if not fatally ; and as it was, the loss of the dress must be trying just at this time, when the Glarisford festivities were approaching ; particularly as Mrs. Tatlow was well aware,

that the not very large allowance which Ellen's parents were able to afford her was generally soon spent, and never forthcoming in cases of emergency.

At another time she might have wished, if not to prevent her niece from attending such an entertainment, at least not to give her any encouragement; but she was going to this assembly herself, and, besides, was rather penitent for former harshness: she resolved, not only to countenance the ball, but also to give to Ellen a peace-offering; either buying her an altogether new dress, or having the burnt one made as good as new at her own expense.

The time was short, and all dressmakers she knew were overwhelmed with work. But Mrs. Tatlow was a woman of resources. She had a very handy parlour maid, who had once been a dressmaker, and with whose assistance she and the girls could surely make a new dress, or repair the old one.

It was now the second morning since the party, at which the accident had occurred, and Mrs. Tatlow resolved to lose no more time in carrying out her benevolent plans towards Ellen. She therefore put on her bonnet and shawl, and set out for the Abbey on foot, desiring her car to follow her thither, that she might drive into Glarisford, to make the necessary purchases. Outside the Parsonage, she met her brother, Wilfred Grey, and told him on what errand she was bent.

He did not quite understand all the "ins and outs" of the case, but he said, "Get the girls new dresses by all means, and don't stop at a little expense. For my part, I shall willingly pay for one or both. It is their first ball, and we must have them well dressed. Shall I tell Julia to see about it?"

"No, no," replied Mrs. Tatlow, "you may leave it all to me. I shall see that they are dressed suitably."

So saying the lady proceeded on her way. She found her nieces alone, in the breakfast-room of the Abbey. The letters had been late in coming, and Effie was reading one which she had just received. "It is from Aunt Margaret," she said, as she finished it. "She wishes us to return to Rose Cottage at once, she and grandpapa are to be home to-morrow evening; and next week we are to keep house for grandpapa, as a cousin of papa's has invited Aunt Margaret to spend a few days at Arranmore. She is more anxious to go, as she

wishes to see about taking a house for mamma, who is thinking of spending a month at the sea-side this summer. It will be quite more convenient for us to be at home—at grandpapa's, I mean—as we have not arranged our dresses for the ball yet. Aunt Kitty has promised to get up my lace dress herself,—she is such a beautiful clear-starcher. I am sure she will make it as good as new."

"But if you require a new one, Effie, we shall see about getting it," said Mrs. Tatlow.

"Oh, thank you, no, Aunt Fanny; it will be as nice as can be with the new blue ribbons which I have."

"I came this morning purposely to see about your dresses," said Mrs. Tatlow. "If you really have what is suitable, it would be a pity to spend money on a flimsy thing which you would never require again."

"I am eighteen, and Effie is twenty. Do you think this is to be our last ball, Aunt Fanny? Not a very brilliant prospect, is it?" said Ellen, pettishly.

"It is quite probable at least, that you may never again be invited to Glarisford Castle, or to an entertainment at any other nobleman's house, and I hope, my dear, that you will try to be more sober and discreet in your deportment than you have sometimes been heretofore. I have now come to see that your dresses are suitable for the occasion. In what state is that pink thing of yours, Ellen?"

Effie saw a cloud fast gathering on her sister's brow, and she hastened to say—"Ellen's dress can be mended nicely, Aunt Fanny. I think we can match both the silk and muslin at Mrs. Johnston's."

"I shan't wear *that* pink thing," said Ellen, with a smile, which was anything but conciliatory.

"Dear Ellen," said Effie, "it really will look as good as new when there are some new breadths put into it."

"And I have come purposely to see about it," continued Mrs. Tatlow: "I mean to drive on to town and procure the materials, *at my own expense*; though, indeed, I could find some much better use for the money, but I daresay your coming here has cost your parents quite enough already."

"You are very kind, Aunt Fanny," said Effie, colouring.

"but indeed I have money enough to pay for anything that Nell may require."

"That is just what I should have expected," said Mrs. Tatlow; "you have your money, I have no doubt, and I am equally certain that Ellen has spent hers: but you will require all yours for yourself, Effie; and for this once I shall undertake to pay for whatever may be required in Ellen's dress. Put it into a box just as it is, and I shall take it to Mrs. Johnston, and ask her what she would recommend me to do with it. She herself would not, I know, undertake it this week; but Eliza, my parlour maid, is a capital hand at such things, and if she only receives full directions she will do it beautifully. It is rather inconvenient to spare her this week, but I shall manage it."

"Do not, if you please, inconvenience yourself on my account," said Ellen, not moving from her seat, or showing any intention of going for the dress.

"Make haste, if you please," said Mrs. Tatlow, looking at her watch. "It is getting late, and I see my car coming."

Ellen sat perfectly still, but as Mrs. Jefferson just then entered the room, Mrs. Tatlow did not observe this, and Effie, with one more glance at her sister, hastened away to procure the dress herself.

Mrs. Jefferson was followed by her eldest son, whose fine horse was at the same time led to the hall door. The young man held in his hand a full-blown rose. It was neither a celestial rose, nor what is usually called a blush rose, but one of those not very symmetrically-shaped flowers, which, from a centre of the loveliest pink, shade to almost pure white in the outer petals, and which possess a flowing irregular beauty of their own, although they may not look so well in a bouquet as their more tidily-shaped sisters.

"My pattern," said Captain Jefferson, smiling; and as he glanced toward Ellen, he held the flower so that she could see the full beauty of its colouring.

She blushed brighter than the rose itself, but said nothing, while Julius continued—

"These flowing lines have already a likeness to graceful drapery; recommended, too, by my artist brother, it must prove beautiful."

A pang shot to Ellen's heart. What did Captain Jefferson mean? But she could not have asked him, even if he had not turned away to speak to his mother and Mrs. Tatlow. Then with promises to be back in good time for dinner, he mounted his pawing charger and rode away.

Effie soon returned; she carried the dress neatly folded in a large pasteboard box. It was rather too unwieldy in its size for her to carry with ease, but Ellen did not offer to help her.

"What is it, my dear?" asked Mrs. Jefferson, her instinctive good nature prompting her to rise instantly to offer her assistance.

"Only a parcel which Aunt Fanny said she would take to town," replied Effie, as she laid the box on a side table; "it is not heavy, only large."

"You must not carry it any further at least, dear," said the elder lady, as she rang the bell to summon a servant.

"I suppose you are stiff, after your wild ride yesterday?" said Mrs. Tatlow to Ellen; "you do not seem disposed even to go your own messages. I really never——" but Mrs. Tatlow observed at that moment that her horse and car were waiting, and she did not finish her sentence.

Mrs. Jefferson accompanied her to the hall door.

When the sisters were left alone, Effie said:—"It is not pleasant, dear Nell, but do try to take it agreeably. She is our own aunt, you know, and I am sure she means to be kind."

"If I should stay at home altogether; or go to the ball in a printed calico," said Ellen, "I shall not wear that dress, nor any other that Aunt Fanny has had anything to do with; she would have her eyes on me the whole evening; and even if I were dancing with the Marquis of Glarisford, or Lord Carlisle himself, she would come and tell me that I must be careful not to let the tarlatan catch in his stars and orders."

"But if you don't wear that, dear Nell, what will you wear?"

"I don't know—my brown winsey, perhaps; there are often very cold evenings in May."

"I have plenty of money to buy you a white muslin,"

continued Effie, "and it would be as pretty as anything you could wear ; but then Aunt Fanny would be so hurt. Why did you not say at first that you did not wish her to do anything about it ?"

"Well, for one thing, I had not time : it was all settled before my opinion was asked ; and for another, Aunt Fanny and I would surely have quarrelled—had a regular battle," and Ellen laughed, a short not merry laugh ; but as Mrs. Jefferson returned to the room, Effie said no more : she sat down to her work, looking very sorrowful, and wondering how Captain Jefferson's return, if it had given Ellen real pleasure, could have made this sudden change in her manner.

Since their childhood, Effie had never known her sister's temper so uncertain, or so easily ruffled. She was naturally hasty and passionate, but in the quiet home life, and under the influence of loving and good parents, her temper had been so curbed and trained as to have been of late almost forgotten. What had brought it to life so suddenly and so uncomfortably ?

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## CHAPTER XXV.

It was late in the afternoon, and all the family were assembled in the drawing-room, except Samuel Ward, who had gone to Glarisford, and Captain Jefferson, for whose coming dinner was now waiting, when Mrs. Tatlow again drove up to the door. She was in high spirits, and had come to say how prosperously she had accomplished her errand.

Mrs. Johnston had been able to match both silk and muslin ; farther than this, and advice as to how the dress should be repaired, the great *modiste* of Glarisford could not give any assistance ; she had already more orders than she could possibly execute in the forthcoming week.

"She says the dress can be made quite as good as new," continued Mrs. Tatlow ; "not, of course, as fine as the splendid dresses which she was having made up, but very nice. Her show-rooms are gorgeous, almost like a flower show ; and she has silks, gauzes, crapes, of every colour in the rainbow. I never saw such a display. But I think the most elegant dress—combination for a dress, rather, for it was not made

up—which I saw, was one which it seems Captain Jefferson has something to do with—ordered it, I think she said ; and she assured me, she would not make it this week if she had been asked to do so by any one else, lady or gentleman. Of course it was some of those giddy Castle ladies, or officers' daughters, who asked him to do it. Julius does make such a fool of himself."

"Ah, poor boy, it amuses him," said Mrs. Jefferson, rather pleased to be able to add in Ellen's hearing: "They call it flirting, but it's only gaiety, and lightheartedness ; he likes one girl just as well as another, and tries to please them all. For my part, I'm afraid he'll never marry any one. What is this pretty dress like, Fanny?"

"It was not made up, but Mrs. Johnston described it to me so minutely, that I am sure I should recognise it on any one. The corset and the slip are of the most delicate and loveliest rose colour, whilst over the skirt, not hiding it, for the silk appears in front, is a flowing drapery of white arapheme, which is to be looped up and adorned with blush roses, and long ends of a beautiful ribbon, which is made purposely to match the dress. The body, too, is to be very elegantly trimmed, and there is a spray of blush roses for the hair of the wearer."

"But that's not all Julius's idea, poor boy!" said Mrs. Jefferson, laughing.

"Oh no ; I am sure he must have had full directions. When the grand night comes we shall see for whom Master Julius—why, it seems only the other day that he was in petticoats himself—has ordered this splendid and very expensive dress."

"You and Mr. Tatlow will be at the Castle that night, of course?"

"Yes, I suppose it cannot be helped. Lord Carlisle being there, makes it a kind of duty ; all the clergy in the neighbourhood will be expected to go, to show their loyalty. Good-bye, I must not keep dinner waiting."

When Mrs. Tatlow first mentioned the beautiful dress which Captain Jefferson had chosen, a deep blush overspread Ellen's face, and conscious of her rising colour, she bent over her work, that it might not be observed ; and no one did observe

it, except Julian, who was reading at one of the open windows.

He happened at that moment to raise his eyes, and it was impossible for him not to see the brilliant crimson which Mrs. Tatlow's words had brought to Ellen's cheeks. He withdrew his eyes instantly from her face, but he could not turn his thoughts away so easily from the subject under discussion. That morning, when he and his brother were sauntering together in the garden, Julius had said to him, "Which of all your roses do you recommend as the prettiest colour for a lady's dress?" and he had plucked the only blossom yet fully in blow, on an arch under which they were passing, as he replied, "This might do—might it not? The bright pink for the foundation—I do not know the technical name—of the garment, while these outer leaves represent the flowing drapery of the dress itself."

Julius had taken the rose, and Julian had thought no more about it until Mrs. Tatlow's details recalled it to his mind. But Ellen's crimsoned cheek, what did it mean? Was she in his brother's confidence in this matter, and anxious not to betray his secret? or, the question just glanced across his mind—could the dress be for herself? but he dismissed the idea at once, as impossible—nay, ridiculous: or was the mention of the handsome young Captain and his doings, enough of itself to cause that vivid blush? No, there must be something more, and Julian felt more grieved than he had felt before: now, not only on his own account, but for Ellen also, for he saw that, although gay, she was not happy; there was unrest in her manner, and in all that she did.

When Captain Jefferson returned, no one, not even his mother, mentioned the rose-coloured dress, or alluded in any way to Mrs. Tatlow's conversation.

On the following morning Effie and Ellen Walker returned to Rose Cottage, where for the remainder of the week they were to take charge of the house, and of their grandfather, while Margaret Grey spent a few days at Arranmore.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

THE visit of the Viceroy to Glarisford was now near at hand, and besides the preparations for his reception which were making on a very extensive scale at the Castle, the town was all astir. Hotels and lodging-houses were being made ready, and people who had never let lodgings before were preparing rooms at the urgent request of the many visitors who could not otherwise find accommodation. The grocers, confectioners, bakers, and provision merchants, were adorning their shop windows with strange devices, and laying in a store of good things to be consumed by the great influx of persons of all ranks, whom the viceregal visit was likely to bring in its train. But who shall describe the windows of the millinery and haberdashery establishments as they glowed with all the colours of the rainbow, being hung with laces, ribbons, flowers, silks, satins, and gauzy drapery of every description which could tempt the feminine eye and heart.

During the week which followed their return to Rose Cottage, Effie and Ellen Walker remained much within doors, going out little except to accompany their grandfather when Wilfred Grey sent his car or carriage to take the old man out for a drive. Mr. Grey was able for but little walking: he could hobble about the garden; direct the gardener in the care of the flowers and vegetables; train the climbing plants around the little summer-house; and support and tie up Margaret's Brompton stocks, which were now in gorgeous bloom. This was work enough for him; but this and the company of his granddaughters was sufficient for the naturally happy and contented old man. Perhaps he observed that there was a cloud somewhere in the house which he could not quite understand, but if so, he was sure it would pass away as soon as Margaret returned. It was only natural that the girls should be a little put out by having care which they were not accustomed to.

Since her return, Ellen had remained in the same strange uncertain state of mind, moodiness generally prevailing, except when two or three times Captain Jefferson called, then she would be all brilliancy and animation; and Julius, particularly

when Effie was present, paid the younger sister marked attention. His visits were, however, necessarily few and short, his services being this week much required by his commanding officer.

Effie was not quite herself either; but only a very close observer would have noticed that her spirits were not as unruffled as heretofore.

Neither of the girls appeared now to look forward with much pleasure to the ball which had been so long and, at one time, so eagerly anticipated.

Strange to say, Kitty Grant, the quiet little Quaker old maid, seemed to take greater pleasure in the preparations than either of the young people. Kitty had undertaken the doing up of Effie's lace dress, and—unknown to her sister, who supposed she was washing and clear-starching some muslin curtains, and for reasons of her own thought it best that Kitty should keep out of the way—made a very complete job of it, flounces and all. When finished it really looked as good as new,—neither too stiff nor too limp, too blue nor too yellow. When she carried it up to Rose Cottage Effie was charmed, her only sorrow being that Ellen had not one the same, that so there might be a good excuse for her not wearing the pink dress, although it also was now “as good as new.” Mrs. Tatlow had sent it in from Holybrook, accompanied by a note containing some reference to past, and some good advice as to future conduct and deportment. Ellen threw the note into the fire as soon as she had read it; she would have done the same with the dress had she been alone, and had her grandfather's kitchen grate been sufficiently capacious to receive such a large quantity of silk, muslin, and ribbons.

But the dress did look very nice. It had been smoothed where it required smoothing, and puffed where it required puffing; its bows and its tuckers, its folds and its plaits, were all put to rights.

“Really, Nell,” said Effie, as on the morning of the ball she spread the two dresses side by side upon her own bed, “they do look nice, do they not? We shall be quite the thing, thanks to Aunt Kitty and Aunt Fanny.”

“Thank Aunt Kitty as much as you please,” said Ellen, with a toss of her head; “I don't thank Aunt Fanny, and shall never pretend to do so.”

"Dear Nell! but, indeed, this dress is very nice."

"Oh, I daresay," said Ellen, carelessly. "What time is Aunt Margaret to be home?"

"To-day, I believe. There is some one at the hall door—a porter, I think, with one of her parcels; I shall take it, as I think Jenny is out."

"No," said Ellen, hastening to the door, whilst a quick blush rose to her cheeks, "never mind it; I shall see about it. Look, your dress has fallen on the ground." Effie stooped to pick up the fallen garment, whilst Ellen ran downstairs to receive the parcel.

Jenny, however, was not out, but stood at the hall door, having just received from the porter a large box marked, "Miss Ellen Walker. With great care."

Ellen heard the servant ask sharply, "Where's it from? Who's it for?"

"It's from Mrs. Johnston's, the manti-maker," replied the porter, "and it's for a young lady that lives here. I suppose it's part of what they call the *thru-screw*, for didn't Father Drumgoole tell me, and everybody in Ballynock knows——" here the man lowered his voice, and made some confidential communication to Jenny.

The maidservant had only time to reply, with an astonished "Oh laws!" when she heard Ellen's somewhat angry voice close beside her saying, "Take that box up to my room at once, Jenny."

The porter vanished, and Jenny did as she was desired, but not without observing the bright flush and the look of displeasure on Ellen's countenance, and making her own comments thereupon—"Well, to be sure, and to be sartain," she said to herself, "an' I might have seen it afore, only I don't know why she's so out of sorts, for he's most *asseejus*. It w'd be a fine match for her, no doubt; still I think it's a little praymature for him to buy her a gownd."

When Jenny had departed, Ellen locked her room door, and kneeling down upon the floor unrecorded the large parcel, and took from it layer after layer of thick brown paper, then came a glazy-looking white box, then tissue paper, and then the dress itself, and as she unfolded it she grew quite hot—there was in her mind a strange mixture of feelings, partly of pain and

partly of pleasure. She had never, not even in the milliners' windows or show-rooms, seen anything half so splendid ; but it was not only splendid, it was elegant—exquisite in all its details—a dress which a countess might have worn. She smiled as she looked at it, but it was a troubled smile. “ How ridiculous for Captain Jefferson to get me such a thing as this. I promised to wear whatever he should send ; but such a dress as this ! I wish I could show it to Effie, and ask her what I ought to do ; but I know what she would say, and I mean to wear it. When it is only a kind of wager it does not matter. Aunt Margaret thought it no harm for me to take that expensive photograph ; and everyone says and knows that whatever Captain Jefferson does means nothing. None of them, I suppose, mean anything except to amuse themselves, and I shall amuse myself, too. I was a fool till that low-minded steward and vulgar priest opened my eyes ; and then, as if that was not enough, to think that I should be subject of discussion for Mr. Ward, that he should recommend—and that—that Julian should deny—and—and——oh, I cannot bear it ! ” and scalding tears, which yet she did not allow to flow, rose to her eyes, and she felt that she did well to be angry, while something within her—something which she knew to be as cruel to her own heart as it was wrong in itself—said : “ If I had no other reason for doing so, I should wear this dress to show him and to show them all that I am above such nonsense, and that I am not one of those foolish things who cannot receive little attentions without fancying they are any more than they are intended for.” Then she rose and put on the dress, fastening it as well as she was able without assistance. When she looked into the mirror she was almost startled with the effect and by her own exceeding beauty, and yet her feelings, as she gazed upon her own lovely reflection, were far from being of unmixed pleasure. She did not, however, pause to analyse these feelings ; she was excited, heedless of consequences, and experienced a reckless satisfaction in the course she was pursuing.

She was very young, and naturally delighted in the prospect of the gaiety and triumph now so immediately before her ; and that same hard voice said in her heart, “ He will see now how others can value me,” and beyond this she did not think.

If those who are sowing the wind could but see the harvest which they will in the end reap, not always outwardly, but in their own minds, as surely as autumn follows spring, they would stay their hands at any risk while there is yet time.

Ellen had but just refolded the dress and placed it in its box again, intending that it should lie there unnoticed for a few hours at least, when she heard a step on the lobby outside her door, then a gentle tap, and Margaret Grey's voice saying, "May I come in?"

Hastily putting the box out of sight, she rose and opened the door. "Aunt Margaret!" she exclaimed, "is it you; when did you come? I had no idea you would be here so soon."

"Why, dear?" asked Margaret, as she kissed her niece. "Did not my letter come this morning? Effie quite expected me. Did you think I should not be at home in time to take care of grandpapa while you went to the Castle," she continued, lightly patting Ellen's hot cheek. "But are you well, dear?"

"I! oh perfectly."

"Then, dear, go down to the drawing-room and you may find something which will make you still better. Julian has brought such lovely flowers for Effie and you."

"Flowers!" repeated Ellen; "I do not intend to wear a bouquet to-night."

"My dear, I understood from Julian that you had asked him for them."

"Oh! did he say so? You may tell him that I shall not require them."

"My dear child, what can you mean; come down at least and explain yourself to Julian, for I do not understand you."

"I cannot; I have not time. Tell him I am engaged, sick, anything you please."

"My dear Nelly, you do not mean me to tell Julian anything which is not true, I am sure. He seemed in haste; it is very likely he may have left the flowers and gone away, if so I shall bring them to you." So saying Margaret left the room, but soon returned, bringing the flowers with her. There seemed to her something very strange in Ellen's manner, but

thinking it might be caused only by excitement, she forbore to say anything which might seem like reproof. "They are lovely, are they not?" said Margaret, as she gave Ellen the bouquet composed of the long waxen flowers of the stefanotas and the crimson buds of a very rare greenhouse rose which had always been Julian's especial favourite, and the opening of one of whose lovely blossoms he and Ellen had watched but a week ago. Besides the bouquet, there was a half-blown rose, and a long spray of stefanotas for the hair; and for Effie, some lovely bunches of the blue sollya, mixed with blush rose-buds.

"Are they not lovely?" repeated Margaret, as she laid them on Ellen's dressing-table.

"Oh yes, exceedingly pretty now," said Ellen, coldly, "but they will fade before evening."

"Oh no, dear, I am sure they will not; but you had better put them in water."

"I suppose so," said Ellen, "but I am very busy now;" and she turned away in a manner which plainly showed that she did not wish for more of her aunt's company.

"Effie has told me how nicely Aunt Kitty has done up her dress, and that yours, too, is quite as good as new. I must go to look at them; they are in Effie's room, I think she said."

"They are," said Ellen, shortly; and Margaret went away.

The moment her aunt had left the room, Ellen shut and locked the door, then throwing her window wide open she leaned against the window-sill; a soft, cool breeze blew pleasantly upon her heated brow. "'Tis bright summer now," she said to herself, "but the spring was pleasanter." It was the day of the ball—the day on which the Lord-Lieutenant was to arrive, and the town was all astir; flags flying, music playing, drums beating, crowds everywhere keeping holiday, both on land and water. From Rose Cottage the flags which floated over the Castle were visible, as well as those on the shipping and the higher buildings in the town; and the music of the bands came occasionally, mellowed by distance, and rising or falling as the breezes rose and fell. As Ellen leaned against the window some joyous notes came wafted in softly with the breeze, and the girl's thoughts turned all again to the gaiety and the triumph which was before her. She had never known

how beautiful she was until Captain Jefferson, using the privilege, which seemed to be his natural right, of saying openly what others only looked or hinted at, had told her that she would be the loveliest amongst the lovely, even where all the beauty of the neighbouring counties should be assembled at Glarisford Castle; and when she had seen herself, but a few moments before, arrayed in the beautiful robe which he had provided for her, she felt half inclined to believe his assertion. Again the music rose clearer, more joyous, more full of triumph, and starting to her feet Ellen exclaimed, "I will be gay and happy; I will not trouble myself any more about poets and dreamers, and he shall see it. He shall see how others can value me, although he cannot; I was never intended for unhappiness, and I will not be unhappy." Scarcely looking at the beautiful flowers which Margaret had left on the table, she gathered them up hurriedly and threw them into a drawer which stood open near her. As she did so the sweet perfume was wafted upward, seeming to float like an incense all around. For a moment Ellen stood like one bewildered. There is scarcely anything which can recall past scenes so vividly and completely as the scent of flowers. With a sudden impulse she shut the drawer, and turning from it threw herself on the bed and burst into an agony of tears.

When, however, she went downstairs, some hour or hour and a half afterwards, there were no traces of tears or of sorrowful agitation of any kind upon her face. On the contrary, she appeared full of vivacity, dancing from room to room, singing snatches of lively songs, and seeming in every way the gayest of the gay.

"Well, well," said old Mr. Grey, as he watched her, "I think his lordship may be well pleased to give a ball for the entertainment of such as you, my bright-eyed, dancing Nelly. Dear, dear! I was a great dancer in my day, though you wouldn't think it now. What a thing it is to be young and hearty!" and he turned for sympathy to Kitty Grant, who had come up to spend the evening at Rose Cottage. Kitty had had a great desire to see Effie and Ellen dressed for the ball, but had feared to ask her sister's permission to go, when to her surprise Mrs. Stevens had desired, rather peremptorily, that she should take tea at George Grey's, telling her at the same time

that she was quite too fond of staying at home. Kitty was glad to go, but wondered at so sudden a change in Mrs. Stevens's sentiments. Samuel Ward came to tea at Dr. Grant's, and was sorry to find no one at home except "Cousin Sarah."

"What a thing it is to be young and hearty," repeated Mr. Grey; "but you're as active as ever you were, Miss Grant, and young, compared to me."

"Ah!" said Kitty, sighing softly, "sister often reminds me how old I am growing, and so, of course, I am, and maybe I do not remember it sufficiently. At other times sister seems to think that I am quite a child; in that I am inclined to think she is mistaken, for I doubt if I were ever like a child, much less like a young person—not as I see young people now—as to the outward, I mean—for I wasn't allowed to be gay or lively; sister didn't approve of it; and dear father was too much taken up with weighty matters—besides, he was a sober, serious man, and didn't like much stir, or, of course, anything that could be called gaiety."

Margaret had been watching Ellen closely; it was impossible not to admire her grace, animation, and apparent gaiety, yet there was something in her every look and tone which made Margaret anxious and uncomfortable, although she could scarcely tell why it should be so, or how it was that Ellen appeared different from her former self.

Mrs. Tatlow had written to her something about Ellen's "giddy and frivolous deportment;" but Margaret, knowing that her sister was neither lenient in her judgment nor fond of Ellen, had not given much heed to her strictures. "I am sorry, she thought to herself, that I did not arrange to go to the ball along with the girls; but Julia surely will take good care of them, and Fanny, perhaps, will give them a little too much care." "Come to tea now, dears," she said aloud; "you must take a good hearty meal to sustain you through all the dancing to-night. You, Nell, I am afraid, are in danger of forestalling your dancing powers."

"Not I," said Ellen. "I feel as if I could dance for the next twenty-four hours; but I suppose I must take my tea nevertheless."

"I thought you were going to take tea with the Marquis," said Kitty Grant, wonderingly, as she took her seat at the



table; "I did not know it was customary to eat before going out to an entertainment."

"In my youth," said Mr. Grey, "we used to think it part of our duty to be able to do justice to the good things our entertainers provided. However, that's changed, as well as everything else, and I hope the girls will be able to make a hearty meal. But don't forget that you have still to adorn yourselves in your goodly apparel, and then to come and exhibit yourselves to me. I understand both your dresses are very pretty; I have seen Effie's, but where has your's hidden itself, Nelly?"

"Ellen's only came home last night," said Effie, replying for her sister; "Aunt Fanny had it made very nicely indeed."

"Aunt Fanny!" repeated Mr. Grey, with some surprise; "it's a new thing, is it not, for Fanny to take interest in a ball? but, dear heart! I forgot; it's not a week since she gave me all the reasons for herself and her good man attending this—what was it she called it? I can't remember now, nor what half her reasons were either. They were all very fine reasons, I know—duty, and loyalty, and all those sort of things—I couldn't see exactly how they applied to a ball; but I suppose it's all right."

Just as tea was ended, a note arrived from Mrs. Tatlow to say that as Mr. Tatlow had been obliged to drive into town early in the evening, she would go with Mrs. Wilfred Grey in the brougham, which would thus have to take two journeys, and the first party must go early to admit of the second being in good time. "Julia and I," Mrs. Tatlow said in her note, "will call for Ellen, and drive to the Castle, where my husband will be awaiting us; and Wilfred will return for Effie."

"Then, Ellen," said Margaret, looking up, when she had read the note, "you had better dress yourself at once. But what has happened, dear? you look quite distressed."

"Nothing has happened," said Ellen, rising hastily—"nothing, but that a thorn in one of Effie's roses scratched my finger."

This was a very little lie—if there be such a thing—but Ellen had never been accustomed even to the very whitest of lies, and she did not do it cleverly; Margaret plainly saw

that it was an evasion, though why or wherefore she could not imagine.

"Come, Effie," said Ellen, as she left the room, "come away and dress. Effie," she continued, when they were outside the door, "you must go with Aunt Fanny; I will not."

"But did you not see that your name was particularly mentioned? there is a very black stroke under 'Ellen' in the note."

"I know; but I will not go with Aunt Fanny. I will not go to the ball if there is no alternative but going with her; she thinks I require to be taken care of, and perhaps I do, but not by her—I shall go with Uncle Wilfred."

"But how can we alter the arrangement now, dear?"

"You must dress first, Effie, and then I shall not be ready when they come."

"Let me ask Aunt Margaret."

"No; I shall either go in the carriage with Uncle Wilfred or not at all."

Effie looked troubled; but she did not see sufficient cause why she should not accede to her sister's wish, and she knew that in the present state of things Mrs. Tatlow and Ellen were not likely to have a pleasant drive together.

"Very well, Nell," she said, "I shall do as you wish; but I fear if you desire not to meet Aunt Fanny you are only putting off the evil day."

"There may be evil days enough coming," said Ellen; "but for this night I mean to enjoy myself."

Effie was accordingly arrayed in her white lace dress and blue ribbons, and looked exceedingly nice—more than nice—she looked lovely and lovable; the azure bells of the blue *sollya* which were wreathed among her hair seeming to have grown, and blown purposely to match the soft blue of her eyes, and the bright rose buds giving just the additional colouring which her rather pale complexion required.

"Well, to be sure," said Mr. Grey, as with a pleased smile he surveyed his grand-daughter from head to foot, "you look like anybody's fancy, my little girl. If Nelly herself surpasses you to-night, even she will be clever, won't she, Miss Grant?"

"It's exceedingly pretty," said Kitty Grant—"exceedingly pretty. Now, really, I don't wonder at people being fond of

dress. I don't know how I should have felt if I had been allowed to dress in that way. The gayest thing I ever had in the way of dress was a light tabinet, with a little touch of salmon-colour in it. Sister bought it by candle light, thinking it was a shade of fawn, and when she saw it by daylight she took it back, but the shop-keeper would not change it, and so I wore it at her wedding, and the only party—to call a party—that I ever was at in my young days was the one after sister's wedding. Dear, dear! how different my young days were from yours, girls. But I am sure it was all for the best; people go through life by very different roads, and yet each road may have something to recommend it. Is not that the brougham from Holybrook stopping at the door?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Margaret. "Where is Ellen? Effie, dear, did you not understand Aunt Fanny's note? she wished Ellen to go first."

"Ellen thought it would be better for me to go first, and, indeed, Aunt Margaret, I think it will be better for several reasons. We shall all meet before we go into the reception rooms, shan't we?"

"Yes, I daresay; but I wish I had settled to go with you. Is Ellen dressed, or does she require more help than you gave her?"

"I think not," replied Effie, colouring still more, and turning away to conceal some tears which she felt rising to her eyes when she thought of the very unsisterly reception which her sister had accorded to her some half-hour ago, when she had offered her assistance in dressing. Ellen had said some very sharp things; told her she was only trying to avoid going with Mrs. Tatlow; said she would call Jenny if she required help; and finally, shut and locked her door to prevent further intrusion.

"But is Ellen's dress fastened?" asked Margaret.

"N—no, I think not," replied Effie.

"Oh, then, never mind; I shall do it for her," said Margaret, as she placed Effie's blue opera cloak on her shoulders.

Then Effie tripped down the gravel walk alone, Margaret thinking she was better able to arrange a difficulty with Mrs. Tatlow than she was herself.

She was crossing the hall to go up to Ellen's room, when Jenny came to tell her that the baker and the milk-woman were both waiting to have their accounts settled. Margaret did not like to detain either of these dealers, and asked Kitty Grant to go up to help Ellen, saying that she herself would follow in a few moments. She was detained, however, longer than she expected, and when she did go upstairs she met Kitty coming down.

"It's all done, my dear," said that lady, smiling; "I scarcely know myself this evening, I am getting so clever about dress in my old age. I have fastened Ellen's dress for her, laced it all down the back—to be sure, I'm used to that, for I frequently have to lace sister's stays—and, my dear Margaret, if Effie was lovely, no one could imagine how beautiful Ellen is without seeing her."

"Yes, pink becomes her very well," said Margaret, almost wishing that her niece was not so dangerously lovely.

"Oh! but such a pink! such a dress!" continued Kitty. "Effie's dress was pretty; but Ellen's is fit for the Marchioness herself."

Margaret, who thought that Ellen's tarlatan was quite enough to call forth such praise from Kitty's unsophisticated mind, only smiled, and went on to Ellen's room.

"I hear you are very nice, Nell," she said, as she knocked at the door, "and if you are ready I want you to come down to show yourself to grandpapa and to us all, for I think the brougham will very soon be back; are you quite dressed?"

"Yes," replied Ellen, in a voice which Margaret well knew was only made steady to utter the monosyllable.

"Poor child, she has been crying," she said to herself; "what strange variable spirits she has. I fear all this excitement is too much for her."

"I shall wait for you in the drawing-room with grandpapa," she said, aloud, and then she went downstairs.

"Wilfred is at the gate; the brougham is just turning round," said Mr. Grey, as his daughter entered the room.

"Yes," said Margaret; and she turned to call Ellen, but to her astonishment she saw the girl, whom she thought she had left weeping in her room, passing quickly out through the hall door, which had been left standing open. There was a cloudy

sheen of pink and white drapery floating around her ; but at the moment, Margaret did not think of her dress being any other than that she had expected to see.

When Ellen reached the little gate she turned and, smiling, waved her hand with a graceful farewell ; then Margaret saw her face distinctly, and the flowers which were twined in her dark hair, and saw that they were not Julian's flowers ; another glance showed her that the dress, too, was different. In a moment Ellen had stepped into the little carriage, which immediately drove away.

" Well, really," said Wilfred Grey, when he had time to survey his niece, as she sat opposite to him, " Aunt Fanny has done the thing in style this time. What can have come over the woman ? I did not think she could ever have found it in her heart to buy such a beautiful dress. They will think I am bringing some enchanted princess to the ball."

Ellen's colour deepened, and her eyes began to fill with tears.

" My dear little girl," said her uncle, taking her hand, caressingly, " I am delighted to see you so nicely got up ; I was only afraid Fanny would have bought you some frippery thing. I wanted her to leave the providing of your dresses to Julia and me."

" Did you, Uncle Wilfred," exclaimed Ellen, while her lip quivered—" Oh ! why—oh ! I wish—" but while she spoke they crossed the bridge, and were already in the line of carriages, and among the crowd of people who were hustling and jostling one another, and swaying to and fro, while policemen, who were stationed to mark the lines for the going and returning carriages, struck right and left with their bâtons ; and women screamed and scolded as the great cavalry horses pranced and reared amongst the crowd, while little boys ran hither and thither against carriage wheels and horses' feet, utterly regardless of consequences if only they might see the "sport." The daylight was not quite gone, but all the private houses, shops, and public buildings in the square were already brilliantly illuminated : and in front of the Castle gates hung various devices, contrived by the loyal and patriotic inhabitants of Glarisford, to welcome to their town the most popular Viceroy who ever held the tangled reins of Irish government, as

well as in honour of their own kind-hearted and hospitable Marquis, who lived principally on his Irish estates, and spent the greater part of his money in Ireland.

Inside the gates, the decorations and illuminations provided by Lord Glarisford himself were not less brilliant; the trees on each side of the wide and steep avenue leading up to the Castle were hung with myriads of lamps, whilst the front of the mansion was one blaze of light.

In all this bustle, stir, and gay confusion, Ellen's flagging spirits revived, and by the time the carriage, following and followed by numberless other carriages, at last made its way slowly to the top of the hill and stopped under the great portico, she had, for the time, lost sight of all her troubles. Leaning on her uncle's arm she entered the great hall which, hung with its old armour, waving banners and trophies both of war and of the chase, she had always before thought gloomy in its baronial magnificence; but now brilliantly lighted, lined with servants in bright liveries, and thronged with the gay crowd of visitors, it seemed to her a fitting entrance to the fairy-land beyond, whence flowed the strains of sweet music, and gleamed still brighter light and more brilliant colouring.

For a moment Ellen looked around for her own party, and then they, too, were forgotten in the enchantment of the scene, which to her unaccustomed eyes seemed the realisation of all the fairy lands she had ever read or dreamed of. Such glamour does youth and inexperience cast over scenes which, though beautiful, soon lose the soft deceptive bloom which when once brushed away, can never return as at the first.

As they continued their way, each room seemed more brilliantly beautiful than its predecessor—lights and flowers, sweet scents and soft music everywhere.

At the entrance to the great saloon stood Lord and Lady Glarisford, ready to welcome their guests as they arrived, and to give a kind word to all, from the least to the greatest. Beside them stood the Earl of Carlisle—the "King," as his poor Dublin subjects often called him—smiling and gracious, greeting all with kind courtesy, and conversing with those whom he had before met. Ellen at this point felt a little frightened, but wondered that her alarm was not greater as she saw herself in the presence of so much magnificence—but the ceremony

of introduction was soon over, and she and her uncle were again among the crowd.

Mr. and Mrs. Tatlow, with Mrs. Wilfred Grey and Effie, had been waiting near the entrance watching for Ellen's coming, but as the numbers increased, and the rooms became crowded, they had been pushed on, and were now almost in the centre of the room.

The dancing had already commenced, and Captain Jefferson, who for some time had hung about the party—apparently watching also—at last asked Effie to dance the first set of quadrilles with him.

The *nonchalant* manner in which he asked her to do so was so strange, so unlike anything which Effie had ever before observed in his manner, which was in general almost chivalrous in its gallantry, that she looked up into his face with a quick glance of inquiry.

Captain Jefferson did not reply, even by look, to the enquiring glance, but as he gave her his arm and led her to the dancing-room a warm glow of pleasure filled his heart—he had made Effie uneasy at last, perhaps more than uneasy; that look was worth to him more than he could tell, but he would in no way presume upon it yet—he would still appear, to Effie at least, to be Ellen's *preux chevalier*—Ellen who, with all her sparkling beauty, he did not think worthy of a moment's comparison with her quiet little sister.

Nor did Ellen seem to him to be even what she had formerly been; he fancied it was only that he had become more acquainted with her real character, and although he appeared altogether devoted to her, she was sinking in his estimation day by day. She was beautiful—much more beautiful than Effie—graceful too, and not wanting in winning ways; but she *was* wanting, as it seemed to him, in something which a girl should have—in something which his wife must have; he was not wise enough to perceive that what he believed to be the natural development of Ellen's character was nothing but the feverish restlessness of an unquiet mind, united with extreme ignorance of the ways of the world. He did not in the least suspect her attachment to Julian, much less his brother's attachment to her; but he was, in truth, beginning to fear that *he himself* might have gone a little too far, and that if his

apparent change had troubled Effie's heart a little, it had, perhaps, made more impression than he had intended on that of the younger sister, for, excepting in the one case, the handsome young Captain was not inclined to estimate his own powers of attraction too lightly.

It was just at the time when he felt most piqued by Effie's coldness, that in a thoughtless mood he had ordered that beautiful and expensive dress for Ellen as the fulfilment of his wager. It had been very expensive, and he did not care for that ; but now, looking at it from any point of view, he saw that he had done foolishly to give her, even in jest, anything which, worn by a girl of her station, was sure to be very conspicuous, and which he now, for the first time, remembered that Mrs. Johnston was likely to have shown to all the ladies in Glaristown as his choice and his purchase.

He hoped that Margaret Grey might have been home in time to prevent her niece from wearing it, or that Mrs. Tatlow might have called at Rose Cottage and carried it away bodily.

Effie observed that her partner's mind was pre-occupied ; saw, too, that from time to time he looked anxiously round as if in search of something. She believed that it was for her sister's coming he watched ; but she was far from conjecturing the true cause of his anxiety.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE first set of quadrilles being ended, Captain Jefferson took Effie back to Mrs. Grey, who enquired anxiously whether anything had been seen of her husband, or of Ellen ?

Neither had been seen, but Julius volunteered to go in quest of them. He had engaged Ellen for several dances, but not for any of the earlier ones, as he had not expected to be at the Castle until rather late in the evening ; but she, he knew very well, would have no lack of partners, so he looked for her at once amongst the dancers, and he was not long in finding her. There she stood on the opposite side of the room, looking lovely, radiant, more beautiful than he had ever seen her look



before. Nothing could be more becoming to her than the dress. Unfortunately it was *the* dress, and Mrs. Tatlow had not carried it off. The band was playing a waltz ; some were dancing, others about to begin.

Very soon after Ellen had entered the large reception room, Mrs. Ashton, the Colonel's wife, being told by Wilfred Grey that Ellen had missed her party, and was without a chaperone, instantly offered to take charge of her, while Mr. Grey went in search of his wife. Mrs. Ashton's party was very large ; besides her own two daughters she had other young ladies under her charge, and she was surrounded by gay young officers. The addition of a very lovely girl, very splendidly dressed, naturally caused some sensation, and several were eager to gain her hand for the next dance. One of Lord Carlisle's aides-de-camp, who was a relative of Mrs. Ashton's, and was now amongst her party, immediately requested an introduction, and engaged her hand for the waltz which was about to begin.

"What a lovely creature !" said several gentlemen.

"Who is she ?" asked several ladies.

"I don't think she is anybody," said the eldest Miss Ashton. "She came with Mr. Grey, the owner of those mills near the mountains."

"Yes," said another, "but Mrs. Grey was one of the Jeffersons, of Holybrook Abbey ; she married quite beneath her ; this is probably a relative of hers, a younger sister perhaps."

"Ah, yes, it must be so ; for do you not recollect seeing that beautiful dress at Mrs. Johnston's the day we called about our flowers ? She told me Captain Jefferson had ordered it—for his niece, I think she said—but I fancy none of the Jeffersons are married except Mrs. Grey, and I am sure she has not grown-up daughters. Is that girl Captain Jefferson's sister, mamma ?"

"No, dear," replied Mrs. Ashton, "she is a Miss Walker, Mr. Grey's niece."

"But," continued the younger lady, "that is surely the beautiful dress which Mrs. Johnston said had been purchased by Captain Jefferson for some relative of his !"

"Indeed ! is it ?" said the Colonel's lady, with some sur-

prise, as she looked after her former charge. "No, she is in no way related to the Jeffersons, scarcely connected."

"Whatever she may be one day," said Miss Ashton, "papa says the Captain is sure to have his majority before going to India, and coming events you know—"

"Hush, my dear, Captain Jefferson, though he may appear gay and volatile, is a very sensible young man."

"Did I hear you mention Captain Jefferson?" asked a young Cornet who had just joined them. "I hear he is caught at last, such fellahs always are, you know; and 'pon my word, not a bad looking girl either; very handsome, I should say, but wants style, which is not to be wondered at—she's the daughter of a flour merchant, or baker, or something of the kind, and so poor that I'm told she couldn't have appeared here to-night if the Captain hadn't provided her with a dress to wear. He's done the thing in style, you must allow."

Miss Ashton cast a triumphant look towards her mother.

"Poor thing!" said Mrs. Ashton; "then she might better have remained at home, I should say; but I think even a baker might have provided his daughter with a white muslin dress. What strange people one does meet at these gatherings!"

Then mindful of her own duties, Mrs. Ashton turned to see how the other young ladies under her charge were occupied, and that they were not dancing with any of the "strange people." Her youngest daughter was just accepting Julian Jefferson as a partner; there could be no objection to this, but Mrs. Ashton thought, with some chagrin, "Could Mr. Jefferson have heard us speaking of his brother?" He looked, however, so quiet and unconcerned that she felt satisfied he had not. But in fact, Julian had, quite unintentionally, quite unavoidably, heard all. He had been standing near, and in a part of the room which was so much crowded that he could not move away.

"Such a fabrication, and upon such a slight foundation," he said to himself, "and yet that dress which she wears I think must have been given to her by Julius. He should not have given it to her. And she—poor child! her very acceptance of it makes me hope that all I have fancied may be

untrue. I shall speak to her this very night—tell her all, and know either the best or the worst."

Mrs. Jefferson had been a true seer when she felt that words of censure or disparagement with regard to Ellen would at once call up all Julian's chivalrous feelings, and spur him on to action. He resolved to seek Ellen as soon as this dance was ended, and she was disengaged, to speak to her, and know what were her real feelings.

Julian Jefferson, although neither so skilled in, nor so fond of, most active exercises as his brother, was a more faultless dancer. His figure was light, and flexible, and his love of harmony caused him to keep perfect time to the music. Any girl who secured him for a partner considered herself fortunate, and it was long before Miss Ashton confessed herself fatigued by the airy motion of the dance.

When left to himself, Julian went in search of Ellen, hoping to engage her hand for a quadrille which was about to be formed. Before he found her, however, the poor girl had come to grief—had, as might have been anticipated, received from Mrs. Tatlow the wages of her iniquity.

When Wilfred Grey had at last found his wife and sister, and told them how he had disposed of Ellen, neither of the ladies were quite satisfied, but Mrs. Tatlow was irate.

"Left her under Mrs. Ashton's care!" she exclaimed. "Really, Wilfred, you are thoughtless in the extreme. A person whom we scarcely know anything of, except that she, and her set, are—I do not like to use such a vulgar expression, but I know no other fitting term—the fastest people in the town or neighbourhood. I am sorry, indeed, that Ellen should have anything to do with them. I am inclined to regret that any of us came to this gathering at all; at such mixed assemblies one never knows what strange people they may meet."

"It's well the Colonel's lady is not within hearing, Fanny," said Wilfred, smiling, "but you may be sure that Nell will get on right well, and really I must compliment you on the manner in which you have done your part in dressing her: upon my word, she looks quite splendid."

"Yes," said Mrs. Tatlow, somewhat mollified, "her dress was very pretty; and I think, if for no other reason, she

might have had the good taste to come and thank me for all my trouble, before she began to amuse herself amongst those strangers. I assure you I feel very uneasy about her."

"If so," said her brother, "had you not better find the poor girl and deliver her out of whatever snare she may have fallen into. Take my arm, and we can go in front and see if she is dancing."

"No—remain with Julia. I shall take my husband. Tatlow!"

Mr. Tatlow came instantly from the midst of a group of clergymen amongst whom he had been standing, and his wife, taking his arm, made her way to the front row of those who were watching the dancers. Mr. Tatlow had for many years worn spectacles, and since her marriage, Mrs. Tatlow, who had formerly assisted her rather short sight by an eye-glass, found these spectacles much more convenient, and not unfrequently made use of a spare pair of her husband's, when in anxious quest of any object. They were put on now, to assist in her search for Ellen, and she and her good man, as they stood together in the front rank, both spectaclled and eagerly watching for something, presented rather a formidable appearance.

Spectacles are not very noticeable on a masculine nose at any age, nor on a sober, middle-aged, or elderly lady; but no young woman, be she never so soberly dressed, is improved by these additional features. But when, as in Mrs. Tatlow's case, worn along with full dress—hers was an amber-coloured satin—they had a peculiarly unbecoming, and strong-minded effect; and as she, leaning on the arm of her tall and rather gaunt husband, stretched her neck forward, vainly looking for a girl in pink tarlatan, she was an object for some criticism—to say the least of it—amongst a group of young officers who stood near.

"This is most extraordinary! most extraordinary, indeed!" she said at length. "I see Captain Jefferson dancing, but not with Ellen. There, too, is Mrs. Ashton, at the side of the room, and she is not with her. Can you see any figure dressed in bright pink?"

"My dear, I see several. There, dancing with his Excellency, who is that?"

"The Marchioness, to be sure! How excessively stupid you are, Tatlow! Her dress is pink moiré, and Lady Somerton's is pink satin, and there are four girls besides in pink silk. Pink muslin I told you to look for. Don't you know silk and satin from muslin?"

"I shall try, my dear," said Mr. Tatlow, adjusting his spectacles; then, after some moments of earnest investigation, "I see some pink and white mixed."

"Pink, I said—rather a bright pink."

The husband knit his brows again, to bring the whole force of his vision to bear on an object at the opposite side of the room.

"All pink?" he repeated, inquiringly.

"Really, Tatlow, you are excessively provoking! you saw Ellen's dress when I was having it made up—a most troublesome affair it was—and I think you might recollect it."

"But," he said, in a tone of apology, "but my dear, I think I see Ellen, at least some one exceedingly like your niece, there, leaning on the arm of one of Lord Carlisle's aides-de-camp—that young man in the light blue uniform. The quadrille is ended you see, and now they are beginning a waltz; that girl is partly pink, is she not my dear? and indeed I must say that I think it is Ellen."

Mrs. Tatlow looked at the blue aide-de-camp and looked at his companion, as they whirled past in airy graceful circles, which showed to the fullest advantage the silvery sheen of gauzy drapery as it floated over, and it was mingled, here and there, with the delicate rose-coloured silk beneath; and as she looked, she distrusted both her own eyes and her husband's spectacles, which she had put on to assist them, but to no purpose; from whatever point she viewed it, the figure was that of her youngest niece, and no other! and the dress—yes, now she saw it all; the dress was that which she had seen at Mrs. Johnston's, which Captain Jefferson had ordered; there could not have been two alike; nor had Ellen any means of procuring a garment of the kind had the milliner possessed twenty such.

The aide-de-camp, too! the blue-and-gold aide-de-camp, who was evidently whispering all kinds of nonsense into the girl's ear.

Mrs. Tatlow was very angry, and very hard names for her niece's conduct came into her mind. In fact, so angry was she, and so hard were the names, that she remained perfectly silent until the waltz was ended. Then as the two dancers paused at no great distance, and the aide-de-camp was giving Ellen his arm to lead her back to Mrs. Ashton, Mrs. Tatlow advancing quickly, laid her hand on the girl's shoulder, saying, "Come with me, Ellen!" The words were not severe, but the voice!!

The young officer stepped to one side, with a graceful bow to Mr. Tatlow, who returned the salute with as much coldness and stiffness as was possible, while Ellen bewildered, blushing crimson with annoyance, and seeing no other support near, took Mr. Tatlow's arm.

With another bow the aide-de-camp retired, thinking that his pretty partner had very "rum" parents. Mrs. Tatlow was not, in reality, more than thirteen or fourteen years older than her niece, but the spectacles added at least ten years to her appearance. Acting as guide to the trio, she led them toward the door of a large conservatory, which for the present was almost deserted.

"What is the meaning of all this, Ellen?" was her first question. "I hope you will be able to explain it, or that you have something to say in your own defence?"

"If I understood your meaning perhaps I might," replied Ellen, carelessly, as she arranged one of the flowers on her dress. "I was not aware that I required to defend myself."

"I did not like to see you dancing that round dance with a person you had never before seen; but as there is a kind of liberty allowed at these gatherings, I shall let that pass."

"Thank you, Aunt Fanny."

"That is not what I brought you here to speak about, but this dress; tell me honestly where did you get this dress? You need not try to prevaricate, for I know perfectly well how it has been."

"Then why ask me?"

"Because in your mother's absence, I have a perfect right to do so, and I must know?"

"But you said you did know."

"Have you any idea of the sum of money which a dress like this would cost?"

"I neither know nor care."

"And do you neither know nor care, if all Glarisford is aware that Captain Jefferson has provided you with a dress for this ball? Really, Ellen, even supposing that you had not had that pretty dress which you gave me the expense, and trouble of arranging, it would have been more honourable, more respectable, as well as more maidenly, for you to have come here in a print dress. It must of course have been from mere vanity and love of show that you have done it; or can it be possible that, in your silly heart, you think Julius means anything serious by his attentions to you? And even if you were absolutely engaged to Captain Jefferson, it would be most improper."

Ellen made no reply, but the vivid colour which rose to her cheeks was variously interpreted by those who saw it. Julian Jefferson, who had for some time been seeking Ellen amongst the crowds in the other rooms, just came up in time to catch Mrs. Tatlow's last words, spoken in shrill distinct tones. The girl looked agitated and annoyed, but there was nothing from which he could learn more than he already knew.

"They are about to commence a set of quadrilles," he said, addressing her, "if you are not otherwise engaged, will you dance it with me?"

With a slight gesture of assent, Ellen took the young man's offered arm, and turning to Mrs. Tatlow, said,

"You can conclude your instructions to-morrow, Aunt Fanny, or the next day perhaps would be better, for I shall be sleepy to-morrow, and may not profit by it as much as I would wish."

So saying, she turned away with a light laugh, but she heard Mrs. Tatlow's parting words:

"Ellen, you will never cease to regret this night, and I do not wish that you should."

"We shall reach the end of the room where they are dancing more easily by passing through the conservatory," said Julian, as he led the way between banks of flowers, which rose, tier over tier, on each side of the tessellated pavement.

Near the centre grew a magnificent white datura, from which hung hundreds of sweet pendulous bells, that filled the air with their fragrance; beneath it Julian paused. "Ellen," he said, turning round so as fully to look into her face, "pardon me if I seem abrupt, but will you not tell me, indeed I think I have a right to ask you, why are you so changed toward me?"

"Every one has a right to ask me anything they like to-night," said Ellen.

"But will you not tell me—have I done anything to annoy or offend you?"

"You!" said Ellen, lightly, "you are at liberty to do or say what you please, without my being annoyed or troubling my head in any way about it. What a splendid datura that is!"

"You think I am taking a liberty in speaking to you now; I had intended to leave all that I felt unspoken; and shall, if you tell me that I must do so."

"I make no laws for you, Mr. Jefferson; say what you please, and leave unsaid what you please. I have engaged to dance with several others, but I daresay there will be time for all before supper."

"I believe you know that I love you, Ellen, although you cannot know how much."

Ellen's heart beat as if it would break through her bosom, but some mocking spirit within seemed to force her to reply, with a light laugh, "I think I do know how much, and I assure you such regard is valueless to me."

Julian drew back as if he had received a blow. He looked into the beautiful face, and he could scarcely believe that such hard words had been uttered by those lips.

"I did not deserve this," he said, "I told you that I had intended to leave even this which I have said unspoken, and it would have been better if I had; but tell me only that your affections are otherwise engaged, and I shall submit uncomplainingly, and pray heaven to bless the two who are dearest to me on earth."

"Many thanks for your kind wishes, Mr. Jefferson; but I see your brother coming, and I now recollect that I engaged to dance this set of quadrilles with him," and turning quickly, Ellen



walked a few steps to meet Captain Jefferson, who had entered the conservatory from the opposite direction. He too came with the intention of making a confession, although of a rather different nature, to Ellen Walker.

"I have been looking for you everywhere," he said, "this is our dance, you know—the 'Lancers,' in which you are perfect."

Ellen took the young officer's arm, and without another word to her former companion, left the conservatory.

Julian looked after their receding figures for some moments, then turning, walked slowly back between the crimson banks of pelargoniums and fuchsia. "It is as I supposed," he said to himself, bitterly, "but so different from all I could have thought of her. Yet, this levity is not her nature, I know it is not, for I have seen into the depths which there are in her heart. If I were only sure that Julius really loved her, I could bear it—I think I could."

The conservatory was beginning to be filled with tired dancers, who came to cool themselves amongst the flowery walks, and Julian left it, not caring to meet so many acquaintances in a place where conversation was more a necessity than in the crowded drawing-rooms.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN the meantime, Kitty Grant was spending what she termed a "very pleasant little evening" at Rose Cottage, talking to Mr. Grey of old times, and endeavouring to form pictures in her mind of how the young people were getting on at the "entertainment." "Though indeed," she frequently said, "it's hard for me to fancy what it's like, for I never saw anything of the kind."

At twelve o'clock John Grant came in quite unexpectedly, just as Kitty was preparing to return home under the escort of Jenny Tuff. The Doctor had spent an hour or so at the Castle, and to his aunt's great delight, brought intelligence of the gay doings going forward there.

"Now I want thee to tell me all about the grand people

thou hast seen there, but especially the Lord Lieutenant. I suppose he dances better than any one else?"

"Terpsichore!—isn't that her name—would not be much honoured to-night, if that was the case," said John Grant, laughing; "but I mustn't talk treason. His Excellency looks very good-natured, and is as good as he looks. Ellen was, I think, dancing with one of his aides-de-camp."

"Well to be sure!" exclaimed Mr. Grey, "that will be something to tell her mother: but I doubt if there was a prettier girl there than our Nell. Now was there?"

"Ellen,—yes, she looked very handsome, and was very splendidly dressed—"

Dr. Grant paused suddenly, for he too had somehow heard that Captain Jefferson had given her the dress, and he feared he might be touching on some subject on which it would have been better not to speak.

Margaret looked at him enquiringly. "Her dress was pink muslin over pink silk," she said, as if to assure herself of the fact, and to put away an idea which all the evening had been perplexing her mind. "Was it not?"

"Pink, yes, I think there was something pinkish; but you know I am not a close observer of dress."

"Pink muslin!" repeated Kitty Grant. "Oh no! Margaret dear, there was no pink muslin about it. I am sure of that, for I laced her back—lacing is a thing I am accustomed to, on account of sister's stays." Then Kitty Grant looked frightened, felt that she should not have mentioned such particulars in Mr. Grey's presence; and, catching herself up shortly, continued: "At least, thou sees, Margaret, I fastened the back of her dress, and I know there was no pink muslin. There was lovely pink silk, and white lace, and a quantity of silvery white gauze, and ribbons and flowers; and now, dost thou know the pretty creature when she was finished reminded me of a blush rose more than anything else I could mention."

"Nell seems to have undergone some curious metamorphosis," said Margaret, greatly wondering, but not wishing to appear too much surprised, "And what of Effie?"

"Oh, Effie was charming, as she always is. If Ellen was like a blush rose, Effie resembled a wood violet, eyes and all.

But I am forgetting that Colonel Ashton told me a piece of news, which occupied my mind to the exclusion of other things—the regiment is ordered to India, and to sail as soon as possible. One or two of the officers are to remain here at the depôt, but not Captain Jefferson.”

“Poor Julius!” exclaimed Margaret; “and we may not see him for many a year. I am very sorry.”

“So am I,” said Dr. Grant; “and yet, for his own sake, it may be better for him to go. India may have fewer dangers for him than Holybrook at present. The Ryans would work him woe sooner or later. Julian they would never injure.”

“Julius knows, of course, that his regiment is under orders? Poor fellow, they might as well have allowed him to enjoy himself this evening.”

“He appeared to me to be enjoying himself very much, except that just as I was leaving he was anxiously looking for Ellen, who had promised to dance the ‘Lancers’ with him, but I daresay he soon found her.”

“I wonder what they have been all doing while I was away,” thought Margaret, who felt a presentiment of ill creeping uncomfortably into her mind; she feared that she had been careless in leaving her nieces for so long a time.

“Come, John dear,” said Aunt Kitty, rising, and taking her little “Thibet” shawl and long light silk bonnet from the side table where she had laid them. “I think we must be going; thou wilt like to get back to the Castle. It was very kind of thee to think of coming for me.”

“Not at all, aunt; don’t hurry on my account.”

“Ah, but sister wouldn’t be satisfied. I’m not sure if I was out so late these twenty years, except maybe at Holybrook.”

Margaret Grey accompanied her guests to the hall door; and when they had gone, she still remained standing in the porch, to enjoy the balmy freshness of the sweet night air, which was filled with the fragrance rising from freshly opened leaves and sleeping flowers, on which the light dews were falling. She was about to return into the house when she heard a quick step coming up the road. It stopped, the

little gate opened, and then she saw a figure coming up the gravel walk, which she soon recognised to be Julian Jefferson.

"I was passing, and saw you standing in the porch," he said, as he came near. "How peaceful everything looks here. How different from the scene I have left!"

"But you intend returning to the Castle, surely! You are not ill, I hope?"

"Ill! I scarcely know; but I could not any longer endure the glare of light, and the strange confusion of sounds. I am on my way home."

"And your brother, where is he?"

"My brother, he is at the Castle, of course, and is, as always, the gayest of the gay."

"But you have heard that his regiment is ordered abroad, and at once?"

"No! I had not heard. How strange that he did not tell me; but he thought I should have remained, and no doubt his mind was fully occupied. Heaven help me, Margaret, I do not know what is to become of me!"

"My dear Julian!" exclaimed Margaret, much frightened by the tone of his voice, "did you not know that his regiment was likely to be sent abroad before long?"

"Nay, I do not know, it seemed uncertain. But," he continued, with a sad smile, "Well as I love my brother—yes, thank heaven, I do love him still—it is not the thought of parting from him which grieves me now. I had resolved to part from him, and from all my friends, to go abroad, and not to return for many a year, but if Julius goes, I suppose it will be my fate to remain here. It would kill my poor mother to lose us both. I must remain, with all the old recollections preying upon my mind, until they drive all life or happiness out of my heart."

"Dear Julian, do not speak so; I hoped, I believed, that your life was a happy one."

"Yes, it was happy, too happy, but that is all past; yet if I could go abroad, travel for years, forget, try to forget I mean, for I believe it would be a failure after all; but even this is impossible; I must remain here, while Julius—his cup, even now, overflowing with all life's richest blessings—sails away

to those fair lands, perhaps to forget beneath their sunny skies the bleeding hearts which he has left behind him. Butterfly like, he can glance from flower to flower, tasting the sweets of all, but gathering poison from none. If I only knew that he loved her, I could bear it, I think I could bear my own part, for, after all, this life is a little thing. But for her, I could not bear to see her suffer, whilst I had no power to console her—worse than none. Perhaps he really loves her; but oh! forgive me, Margaret, if I say, that I do not think he does."

"What is it, Julian?" asked Margaret, in a trembling voice; some way it seemed to her as if the sweet night air had all at once become damp and chilly, for she trembled all over. "Tell me what you mean. I know nothing, I returned home only to-day. I cannot understand you. Is it of Ellen you speak? You think that, that Julius—" and unable to say more, Margaret looked imploringly into her companion's face. She felt herself bitterly to blame for having left her nieces for so long a time: perhaps it might have been in her power to prevent all this, and yet—what was it?

Julian turned away, and looked up into the soft moonless sky. All was fair and sweet as a summer night could be, the silence broken only by the distant sounds from the town, sounds not perhaps very harmonious when near, but pleasing when softened and toned down by distance.

"Speak to me, oh Julian do speak to me," said Margaret again. "I do not understand you, and I cannot bear to see you looking so unhappy; tell me all: you know you may trust me."

"I know that I may, Margaret, and I will. I had loved Ellen so dearly, and I hoped that she, if she did not quite return my affection for her, at least permitted it. I was very happy until my brother returned; then I saw that she preferred him to me—had always preferred him—if I had known this from the first it might have been different—and yet I cannot tell—I might have known it, had I only thought a little more. Women do not care for such as I am: a poor fanciful dreamer, without even a handsome face to make his dreams interesting." And Julian smiled sadly, as he plucked a half-withered rose, and a passing night-breeze scattered its

loosened petals, and blew them in fitful eddies along the floor of the little hall.

"But this may be your fancy too, dear Julian. How do you know that Ellen prefers your brother? Have you in any way shown her what your feelings are towards her?"

"I believe that I have shown my feelings, if anything, too much. I could not do otherwise. I had no wish to hide from her all that was in my heart. I believed that I had found in her, that which man or woman can meet but once in a lifetime; and although she is lost to me, I think so still. Oh, Margaret, it is very bitter, very hard to bear."

"Have you spoken to her?"

"Yes, this very evening, I told her of my love, although I knew full well that she was already aware of my sentiments," replied Julian—then pausing for some moments, he continued, with evident effort: "She replied that she was aware of them, but that such regard as mine was valueless to her."

"Ellen! did she speak thus?" exclaimed Margaret. "What could have changed the girl so much? made her so utterly uncourteous, as well as unfeeling!" Quite bewildered, and not knowing what the circumstances were, or what Ellen might have to say in extenuation, she feared to say more, she was so ignorant of what had passed during her absence.

"Come in, Julian," she said at length, "my father is in the drawing-room."

Julian followed her mechanically into the cheerful room, where Mr. Grey was sitting in his arm-chair, the large family Bible lying open before him on the table.

"You are forgetting how late it is, Margaret," he said, as his daughter entered. "I am wishing to go to bed, and have been waiting for you; but you have brought more company, I see. Julian, I am glad to see you, very glad: but why have you left the Castle so early? When I was a young man I always staid to the very last, dancing away, as long as I had a girl to dance with. Dear, dear, what a thing it is to grow old, and stiff: but reach me my spectacles, Margaret; though I can't dance, I'm able to read my Bible still, thank God!"

Mr. Grey was not a good reader, but he read devoutly, and as if he believed the words which he repeated. He read the 90th Psalm, which tells us even more than Solomon's oft-

reiterated words, the vanity of all around us; the littleness of this present life; the instability of its goodliest things; the illu-siveness of its brightest promises. Then, standing up—for he was unable to kneel—the old man placed his hands upon the table, bent his grey head reverently, and repeated the simple evening prayer, commending himself, and all who were dear to him, to the continued protection of heaven, concluding with the holy words, which taught as a prayer contain a promise of that kingdom where sorrow may never enter, and instability and illusions are not.

Julian rose when the old man had ended, and taking leave of the father and daughter, went on his lonely way to Holybrook Abbey.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE day after the ball was destined to be an eventful one to several of the persons connected with this history; and the incidents which occurred during the twenty-four hours which followed the long-looked-for festivities at Glarisford Castle, did, whether for their weal or woe, bring several persons to a better understanding of their own real feelings.

Richard Maunders had not been invited to share in the gaieties as the Marquis's guest, but had, nevertheless, been a partaker of that nobleman's hospitalities. The chief butler, being the steward's very particular friend, had invited him to look in for an hour or two, and have a sight of "His Excellency." Mr. Maunders had enjoyed himself, had seen all the great ones of the earth who were then assembled at the Castle eating their supper, and had supped himself quite as well as the best of them, although behind the scenes, but had not—considering the greatness of the occasion—far exceeded moderation either in eating or drinking. Nevertheless, not being accustomed to such late hours, nor to such excellent beverages, as had been administered to him by his friend, he slept long on the following morning, not awaking until the sun was high in the summer heavens.

After various heavings of his large body, and with many querulous sounds not expressive of satisfaction, he sat up in bed

and looked at his watch, thinking it possible that he might have slept an hour, or even two hours after half-past five, his usual time for rising. But what could have gone wrong with his usually good and trusty watch? it almost seemed as if the hands pointed to half-past ten. He rubbed his eyes; turned the watch upside down, and down side up, but to no purpose, it still pointed in the same direction, even continuing to make further progress towards eleven.

"You ould limb," said the steward, giving his watch a shake; "an' it only one month since I gave Mick Mapother, in Long Lane, half-a-crown for cleanin' ye, for to go, and behave this way on me. I'll wait an' see what the big clock says any way," he continued, laying his head again upon the pillow and dosing until roused by the first stroke of the large clock outside—one—two—three—four—five—six—it was in league with the watch, and went on to eleven strokes.

"Well," he said, as he stepped out of bed, at last concluding that there must be "something in it." "It's not every night a man sups at the Castle, nor sees his Excellency figurin' away; an' I doubt the young gentlemen won't be out of their beds for another hour or more; but for all that, such a thing never happened to Richard Maunders in all his born days afore. I've always been up wid the lark, aye and hours afore any lark o' them had his head from under his wing in the winter mornings," he continued, as he drew on his coat, and fastening the last button of his capacious waistcoat he walked toward the outer door. As he opened it he heard a little rustle, and looking down saw lying on the floor at his feet a dirty slip of paper, folded awkwardly into the shape of a three-cornered note. As the door had been locked, this must either have fallen from his own pocket, or been pushed in from outside. Taking it up and opening it he found that it was addressed to himself, and contained a few lines of blotted and almost illegible writing. It was some time before the steward was able to decipher these words—"Mister Manders, for the luv of heaven send the captin off afore to-night, or he'll be a ded man 'fore mornin', bein' marked by them as won't be slack."

At first Richard Maunders was not disposed to give much heed to this document—; but on looking over it again, he concluded that for many reasons it might be well to put the young man on



his guard. "The only wonder is," soliloquised the steward, as after turning the matter in his mind for a few minutes he crossed the yard toward the back-door of the great house, "The only wonder is they haven't been afther him sooner. Sure a man might as well anger the divil himself as Pether and the mother, and they set as much store by the ould pig-stye—let alone the dogs—as if it had been built of hewn gould."

At the Abbey, Richard Maunders was told that Captain Jefferson had ridden away an hour ago, and that he did not intend to be back until late in the afternoon.

Julian too was out: he had walked toward the mountains, and no one could tell when he was likely to return.

Hearing the steward's voice, Mrs. Jefferson came out into the hall, and calling him up from the back premises asked, "Who are you looking for, Richard?"

"For the Captain first, and for Mr. Julian if *he*'s not to be found," he replied; then observing that the lady's eyes were somewhat red and swollen, "I hope there's nothing astray, ma'am."

"No, Richard, nothing more than I had reason to expect—my poor boy is going to leave me in a few days, perhaps sooner."

"The Captain, ma'am?"

"Yes; his regiment is ordered out to India."

"Heaven be praised, ma'am! that's all right."

"Why, Richard! how can you say so?"

"Because, ma'am, I think he'll be jest better away for awhile, for there's them in the country are n't too fond of him."

"You mean the Ryans?"

"Aye, ma'am."

"But they're going away."

"That's all right, too, ma'am. Have you any notion where I'd come up wid the Captain or Mr. Julian?"

"The Captain is gone to town, but where I do not know; he said he had business in several places."

"The most part of it at Mr. Grey's, maybe," said the steward, thoughtfully. "You said Mr. Julian was gone too; I'll likely come up wid both of 'em at the Rose Cottage, so I'll jest harness Jane and be off at onct."

"I hope there's nothing wrong?"

"Wrong! Oh bless your heart, ma'am, all's right as can be up to now, only you know if I don't see to things in general they will go wrong, and I'd want a few words wid the Captain 'fore he'd go, as is natural."

"Yes, of course," replied Mrs. Jefferson, and lowering her voice a little she continued, "I wish you'd induce my brother to go to town with you; a little drive would do him so much good." Then as she re-entered the library she said, addressing Samuel Ward, who was sitting in a square uncomfortable way in one of the uneasiest of the armchairs which the apartment contained, "Don't you think you'd like to take a little drive to-day, Samuel?"

Samuel Ward, who was reading the newspaper with—for him—a very sulky expression, replied, "What for?" The fact was that the good man was very much "out of sorts," having that morning received another letter from Dublin, containing a still more urgent request, that he would speedily return home and dismiss from his service, or otherwise quiet, his housekeeper Betty, who was upsetting the whole of his quiet establishment by her unruly tempers. "What for?" he asked, looking slightly over his newspaper.

"Oh! I have a message or two I'd be glad to send by you."

"What are they?" asked Samuel Ward, in a stern and solemn voice.

"Oh, you know," said Mrs. Jefferson, not just then recollecting what messages there were, although certain that there must be some, if she could only think of them; but her brother, continuing to look sternly at her, she could remember nothing except, "I'm sure there's bread wanting."

"I don't feel it my place to go to town to procure bread," said Samuel Ward, settling down again to the perusal of his newspaper.

"No, of course I didn't mean you to go for bread; but I remember now what I really do wish is, that you would go into town and invite Cousin Kitty to spend the day with me: it would be such a comfort for me to have her, and she'd help me to hem poor Julius's pocket-handkerchiefs."

"If thou wishes Cousin Kitty to come here, thou hadst better write a note to her, and send it by Richard Maunders."

"Ah no, Samuel dear, I shouldn't know then whether she

were coming or not; and wouldn't you like to have Kitty's company yourself?"

"It would suit me quite as well any other day, I am not anxious."

"Ah now, Samuel my dear, do, just to oblige me. I feel so low; and then you know a drive or a walk will do you so much good."

"I am quite well, I am obliged to thee, Charlotte, and should prefer sitting quietly here," said Samuel Ward, rising, nevertheless, and slowly folding up his newspaper; "but if thou can't feel easy without, I suppose I must go." Then he walked out into the hall and brushed his coat in so determined, although dispirited, a manner, that his sister's heart sank within her, and she wished she had "let him alone."

"You know, Samuel," she said, as he took his seat on the car, still in the same intractable square attitude which he had assumed ever since the post had arrived that morning, "you know you can just give my message to Kitty, and she will be quite willing to come back with Richard, if you incline to stay, or have any business in town."

"I have no business whatever in town," replied Samuel Ward, gloomily; and then Richard Maunders chirped to his mare, and they drove away; then Mrs. Jefferson would have sat down and cried, if it had not been that there were multitudinous pocket-handkerchiefs, shirts, &c., to be looked after for her step-son.

"Where will I leave you down, sir?" asked Mr. Maunders, as the car neared Glarisford. "At the cottage, or the Doctor's?"

"I must go to John Grant's, I suppose, with this message of my sister's; but thou mayst take me on a little further, and set me down at a point from which I can obtain a view of the river and the shipping, which appear to be very gay at present."

"Well and good, sir; I'll set you down at the top of Bridge Street, and then I'll drive back, and put up the car at the Doctor's while I look for the Captain. Jane's better in a stable nor about the streets to-day; and the Captain 'll be sure to be somewhere near, as His Excellency's to go off at half past two o'clock. He'll likely be taking the young ladies

down town, him or Mr. Julian, so I'll go to Mr. Grey's directly."

"Thou canst tell Cousin Sarah or Kitty, whichever thou happens to see, that I shall be with them presently," said Samuel Ward, as he alighted at the top of Bridge Street.

Mr. Maunders drove back to Dr. Grant's, where Dan Corr, who was chewing a straw outside the gate, took his horse and led it round to the yard, whilst the steward went into the house to deliver his message. Mrs. Stevens was alone in the drawing-room when he entered.

"I've took the liberty, ma'am, of leaving Jane and the car here for a little. Mr. Ward's in town, and he desired me to say he'd be here presently to visit Miss Kitty, after he'd seen a little of the divarshon down town. He'll be asking her to go down with him, most likely, to see the sport; but any way I'll call back for him."

Mrs. Stevens could scarcely repress the mingled emotions of surprise and disapprobation, which filled her bosom at these words. "To visit Kitty and to see the sport!" she repeated to herself; but she only frowned at Mr. Maunders, and said, "Thou may leave thy horse here if thou likes, Richard, and I shall attend to the rest."

Then as he took his departure, she with lowering brow and tightly closed lips ascended to her sister's chamber—it was a back room looking out on the yard, and Kitty was sitting in the window tacking together the caul and the headpiece of one of her own little muslin caps.

"Kitty," said Mrs. Stevens, solemnly, as she closed the door and stood looking at her sister. "Kitty, dost thou expect any visitor to-day?"

"No, sister," replied Kitty, starting so that the needle with which she was working ran sharply into her finger.

"Well, what makes thee so nervous?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Kitty—looking unhappily at two spots of blood which had fallen on the neatly-crimped border of the muslin cap, making it unfit to wear until it should be washed and cleared again—"I always was nervous."

"I think thou art increasingly so, and I don't like it at all. I came up to tell thee that if thou must spend a day with Cousin Charlotte, I think this is the best day. I can spare

thee, and John will not require his horse for an hour or two, so that Dan may drive thee out. I shall send for thee in the evening again—remember thou art not to stay the night. Now lose no time in putting on thy bonnet and shawl, for probably Dan will be ready before thee."

Kitty's countenance lighted up instantly at the idea of spending a day in the country, and especially with Cousin Charlotte. "I'm very much obliged to thee, sister," she said. "I'll be ready in a few minutes. If thou hadst only told me before, I'd have had on my bonnet and shawl now."

"Hadst thou any prospect of going elsewhere to-day?"

"No, sister."

"H'm," said Mrs. Stevens to herself as she went down to order the gig to be prepared. It seemed to her that Kitty was innocent of all intention of seeing the gaieties which were going forward in town; but then, might not this great alacrity in preparing for a visit to the Abbey be caused by the hope of spending the day with Samuel Ward? Unfortunately, however, there was no other place in the neighbourhood to which she could be sent; and Mrs. Stevens resolved on keeping the elderly swain to dine with herself and her nephew, and not allowing him to return to the Abbey until the car went for Kitty.

If anyone had just then asked Mrs. Stevens what her reasons were for making all these arrangements, she would not probably have been able to assign any more cogent, than that Samuel ought to have more discretion, and that Kitty would find it her place to stay with her; besides, she had a natural taste for preventing everything which might be going on in her family circle.

If there was one thing in the world Dan Corr did quickly, it was harnessing a horse; this was a great advantage in a doctor's man, and he prided himself on it. This time, however, he actually outdid himself; even Mrs. Stevens was surprised by the celerity with which her orders were obeyed, and the gig had been standing at the door some minutes before Kitty came down stairs.

"I hope John won't be wanting Dan or the horse before they return," she said, turning to her sister.

"If thou art uneasy thou hadst better step in at once," Mrs. Stevens replied; and Kitty climbed up to the seat, stumbling in

her eagerness to obey her sister, and not to cause any unnecessary delay to her nephew's man and horse; and in a few minutes more Dan and she were proceeding up the road toward Holybrook.

"The mistress said you was in a tarin' hurry, Miss," said Dan, as they slowly ascended the hill; "but ye see no man could trot his beast up this."

"Oh no, Dan, I'm not in any hurry unless thy master may want thee back, and, indeed, I'd rather not go very fast. What makes the horse put back its ears that way?"

"It's no wonder for her," said Dan, with a little flip of his whip, which made the animal shake its head and look still more vicious.

"Oh! please don't, Dan," said Kitty, nervously; "I'd much rather thou wouldst let it go slowly."

"'Deed, Miss, the only wonder is that Sally can go at all in this harnish."

"But didn't thou make the harness all right before thou came out?"

"Oh aye, as right as a man could with a swarm a bees about his ears, and the mistress bleezing out of the back-door at him, and I thinkin' the world w'd go to jaup if the gig warn't ready in half no time, and then you kep me waitin' twice as long."

"I'm very sorry, Dan; but I was as quick as I could."

"The ould gentleman's in town, I suppose?"

"Who didst thou say?"

"Mr. Ward, Miss."

"I do not know; why dost thou ask?"

"Oh, jest for the curoosity of the thing, nothin' more."

Black Sally had been slightly uneasy during the slow progress up the hill which led out of Glarisford; but when, having reached the level road, Dan encouraged her to a quicker pace, both by voice and whip, she, instead of trotting on as might reasonably have been expected, placed her fore feet firmly on the road, and with the hinder hoofs kicked vehemently against the gig.

"Oh, Dan! Dan!" cried Miss Grant, "get out—oh, please get out and help me down."

"Woo-o, pet! woo-o, Sally! woo-o, girl!" cried Dan, in his most soothing voice; but Sally would not be soothed,

Having kicked vehemently for some time longer, another and still more frightful idea took possession of the tall quadruped—she reared on her hind legs till it seemed as if she would have fallen back into the gig; then plunging forward she proceeded on her course in a succession of short leaps, which every moment threatened to upset the gig. Dan said, "No fear, Miss—no fear," frequently; but Kitty, speechlessly, clutched the side of the vehicle, expecting each moment to be her last. They, however, reached their destination without further injury than might be caused by alarm. Miss Grant was pale as death, and trembled so that she could scarcely dismount from the gig.

"Why, Kitty, my dear child," exclaimed Mrs. Jefferson, as she hastened out upon the steps to meet her friend. "Did the horse run away? or what has happened?"

"Oh! I don't exactly know what it did," gasped Kitty; "but I never was so frightened in my life—I think it was worse than running away."

"Is not that the Doctor's horse, Dan?" asked Mrs. Jefferson; "I thought she was a tolerably quiet animal?"

"Oh aye, ma'am, though she may be rather ticklish now and agen; what ailed her to-day was that she didn't like the smell of Jane on the harnish."

"And what had Jane to do with harnish?"

"Oh, it's jest her's—Mr. Maunders's Jane's harnish."

"Mr. Maunders's harness! I hope no accident has occurred to Mr. Ward and him."

"Oh nothin' as I knows of, ma'am, only he jest driv into the yard that minnit, and, says I, I'll put up Jane, sir, and with that Mrs. Stevens sent out in a tarin' hurry for Sally to be harnished, so I jest claps Jane's on Sally's back, and round wid me, gig and all, to the hall door in less than no time."

"And you have left my brother and Richard Maunders without a harness!"

"Och, sure they won't want it—aren't they in seein' the sport?"

"Oh, Dan! Dan!" said Kitty, feebly, "how could'st thou do such a thing? thou might have killed both thyself and me."

"Do such a thing!" muttered Dan Corr; "Haith an' I don't know what a man is to do that has weemen bizzin in his

ears like a swarm of bees from mornin' to night—one tellin' him to go one way an' tother th' other, besides the master."

"But, Dan," asked Mrs. Jefferson, "I can't understand what has become of my brother; is he safe?"

"Oh aye, as safe as a church, only Mrs. Stevens is waitin' at home to show him the differ—"

"The differ of what, Dan?"

"Well," replied Dan, hesitating, as he took off his cap, scratched his head, and looked round him and into the hall where Kitty had retreated, and now, in a state of collapse, was seated on one of the chairs, "the long and short of it is, ma'am, the mistress thinks Mr. Ward's a courtin' Miss Kitty, and thinks to squash him."

"Come, come, Dan; step into your gig and go home, and don't take such foolish ideas into your head again."

"Haith 'twas none of me put 'em in my head; and if a chap's axed, what can a fellow do but tell? an' as far as I go I sees no objections."

Mrs. Jefferson frowned, and, waving her plump white hand towards Dan Corr, went in, shutting the hall door behind her. Then she took Kitty's hand and led her into the library, untied her bonnet, unpinned her shawl, prevailed upon her to drink a glass of wine, and strove to comfort her, body and mind, in every way she could think of, but all would not do. Kitty burst into tears, and refused to be comforted; talked of old times—of her youth's bright promises—of her present desolation; comparing herself to a shipwrecked vessel—a pelican in the wilderness, &c., &c., and was generally miserable for several hours, thereby greatly retarding Mrs. Jefferson's operations amongst the shirts and pocket-handkerchiefs; but wintry nights, they say, are worse to bear, just before the break of morn.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN Mrs. Stevens had seen her sister safely out of the house, and when the gig had quite disappeared, she put on her spectacles, took her knitting, and seated herself beside the front window to await the arrival of Samuel Ward, who—in-  
nocent man—quite unaware of being the cause of any disturb-



ance, was soon seen opening the outer gate, and crossing the gravelled court before the house.

He had had an excellent view of the river and the shipping, now all bedizened with flags in honour of the Viceroy's visit. The sight had been lively and cheering, the drive and the pleasant summer air had been cheering also, and his spirits had risen so much that he now felt almost as if he could discharge Betty—at least, write a letter home, to say that she must go—of course, remaining himself at Holybrook until a week or fortnight after she was clearly out of his house. But then, the house-keeping; who *would* manage the house if Betty were gone?

So cogitating he knocked at Dr. Grant's hall door, and, wiping his feet carefully, entered the drawing-room.

"Well, Sarah," he said, as he took his seat on the sofa, "thou art knitting——"

"I am knitting," replied Sarah Stevens, sternly.

"Kitty is out, I hear?"

"Kitty is out."

"Was Richard Maunders here?"

"Richard Maunders was here."

"Ah! and has left?"

"He has left."

"He was to call here for me."

"Yes, he said he would call, but I think it will be quite for the best for thee to stay here, and dine with John and me; there are some accounts of mine which thou canst look over."

"Ah, accounts! Well, now, dost thou know I don't feel much disposed for looking over accounts just at present."

Mrs. Stevens looked up penetratingly. "It does not appear to me that thou hast any other sufficient reason for coming to town to-day, and really, Cousin Samuel, it seems very strange to me that a Friend of thy age should wish to be about here when there is so much stir."

"So much stir!" said Samuel Ward, quietly repeating Mrs. Stevens's words; "Quite a stirring day in Glarisford, as far as I could see. Didst thou say that Kitty had gone to town?"

"I would not let Kitty go to any such place."

"No. I should say there was too much bustle for a woman Friend to go alone."

"I should not let Kitty go under any circumstances."

"Charlotte gave me a message for Kitty."

"I don't think that Charlotte has any right to interfere."

"Dear, dear! no right to interfere! How is that? Now I don't seem quite to understand thee."

Mrs. Stevens was silent for some moments, but knit on vigorously, then she said: "I feel it to be my duty to watch over my sister for good; and if thou hadst anything particular to say to her, I think thou shouldst speak to me first on the subject."

"Dear me! well, that did not strike me," said Samuel Ward, quite unable to see what was the drift of his companion's discourse. "Charlotte thought of writing a note, or at least I proposed that she should do so."

"That I think would have been still more out of place," said Mrs. Stevens; and thinking that she might as well come to the point at once, she continued, "And to tell thee the plain truth, I consider, that at thy age, and at Kitty's age, you would be both much more in your places, as well as more respected, if thou wouldst put this foolish matter by altogether."

Samuel Ward looked at Sarah Stevens with a countenance so blank and so void of comprehension that she did not know what to think or to say next.

"Put this matter by!" he repeated. "Well, now, it is not always easy to understand women Friends. I can't say I quite gather thy meaning, Cousin Sarah. Perhaps I am getting a little thick of comprehension, I am—as thou hast frequently reminded me—advancing in life."

"Thou art; and that is the reason I should have expected thee to act in a more sensible manner."

"Dear, dear! and I quite took it the other way!"

"There is one kind of sense expected at one age, and another kind at another; and, considering everything, I believe it is for the best that I should speak to thee plainly; and that thou shouldst let me know at once what thy intentions are towards my sister. I recommend thee, indeed I may say I insist on thy giving up the matter: thou art much better single, and so is she."

Samuel Ward was surprised, exceedingly surprised, and yet

not displeased. Such an idea as asking Kitty to marry him had never before even presented itself to his mind ; but now, suggested by Sarah Stevens's objections, it suddenly appeared to him as the best, most agreeable, and, indeed, only way in which he could make his home comfortable, and once for all get rid of Betty. If he were to marry a managing, house-wifely woman, even Betty herself could not expect to be retained as housekeeper, seeing she would have nothing to do. He knew how quiet and gentle Kitty was, had always had a very considerable regard for her, and would rather have her to take care of himself and his house than any woman of his acquaintance. How was it that he had never thought of this in all his difficulties ?

"Well, Cousin Sarah," he said—not allowing that sagacious woman to see how uncalled-for her warning had been, nor that she had suggested any new idea to his mind—"dost thou know, it rather appears to me that when a man is past sixty, and a woman Friend past fifty, the time is come for them to judge for themselves."

"Oh, of course, thou may do as thou likes—not that I think thou hast done at all well—thou shouldst have mentioned the matter to me long since ; but this much I can tell thee, that I believe Kitty will find it her place to stay with me."

"Quite best that all should fill their proper places," said Samuel Ward, rising. "I shall give what thou hast mentioned my weighty consideration ; it strikes me that there is much in what thou says."

Feeling mollified by this apparent concession, Mrs. Stevens asked Samuel Ward to take a glass of wine.

"Thank thee, no," he replied ; "I see Richard Maunders coming in, and I may go with him, if he is ready."

"Well, I shall expect thee back to dinner."

"Thank thee, we shall see. Farewell."

"Well, Richard," said Samuel Ward, as he met the steward outside John Grant's hall door, "art thou ready to return ?"

"No, sir, not a bit nearer ready nor I was ; neither the Captain nor Mr. Julian's at the Rose Cottage, but I left a line with Mr. Grey's Jenny, for in course both of 'em 'll be there some time to-day, seein' there both courtin' the

young ladies, an' I tould Jenny to give it to whichever comes first."

"Then thou art going back to the Abbey, I suppose?"

"No," replied Richard Maunders, who as the day advanced was becoming more and more uneasy about the document which he had that morning received, and he was very anxious to put his young master on his guard, notwithstanding that the Ryans had of late assumed a less defiant aspect, and Peter had that very day borrowed two carts wherewith to move his effects to Ballynock.

"No, sir. I hope it won't inconvenience you, but I must just drive over to the Colonel's, that's a bit at the other side of the town, and see if the Captain's there. Maybe you'd drive down wid me, sir."

"Well, no, I do not wish to go so far; but perhaps I may drive with thee as far as the bridge," replied Samuel Ward, as he and the steward walked together into Dr. Grant's back-yard.

"I haven't a minnit to lose," said the latter, "but laws alive!" he exclaimed, looking into the stable, "if Dan hasn't gone an' taken the harness clean off Jane, an' I only wantin' her to stand here for a few minutes. Anne, my woman," he continued, addressing the tidy servant who appeared at the back door, "where's Dan?"

"Sure, he's gone off wid Miss Kitty, that's gone to spend the day at the Abbey."

"And where did he lave my harness? I don't see it, high nor low."

"'Deed, sir, I don't know," said Anne, looking round her; then, as a sudden recollection struck her, "Didn't I see Dan puttin' the harness off your horse, sir, on to Sally?"

Mr. Maunders uttered a strong expression, which it is unnecessary to put down here, finishing with, "The good-for-nothing lazy limb."

"Sure, sir," said Anne, who was ready to defend Dan in his absence, though she often quarrelled with him at home, "sure, sir, he couldn't ha' helped it, one way nor another, the mistress was in such an awful takin' to get Miss Kitty off."

"I must be off, too, and what the mischief am I to do for a harness?" said Mr. Maunders, gazing round him.

"Considering everything, I think I shall return to Holybrook on foot," said Samuel Ward; "I shall not at all object to the walk this fine day, and I see no particular use in my going down town."

"Faith, sir, 't will be better for you to go nor to wait on Jane, for ten to one I'll never get her an' the car tackled together wid these bits of things that Dan has left, bad luck to him!"

"Richard, Richard, that sounds like cursing, and is not the first I have heard thee utter."

"Faith, an' maybe it 'll be bad luck to more 'n him if I can't come up wid the Captain in time; an' it's a quare thing if a man mayn't speak his mind sometimes."

"Ah-h!" said Samuel Ward to himself, as he took his way along the dry pleasant road, with its fresh green hedges and flowery banks. "Ah-h! so Sarah arranged that Kitty should spend this day with Charlotte, because she thought I should stay in town. Dear, dear!—well, we shall see."

The aspect of the day had changed wonderfully since he had driven in from Holybrook that morning; it seemed then as if everything were going astray—as if he could never be comfortable in his own home again; but now, metaphorically speaking, he felt as if he could snap his fingers in Betty's face, and tell her he was not going to suffer such conduct as hers any longer. The more he thought of Mrs. Stevens's unintentional suggestion the more it approved itself to his mind, so that by the time he reached the Abbey, he had nearly resolved to act upon it, and sometime or other, not just yet, to ask Kitty Grant to be his wife.

That "some time," however, was not long coming, for—the young people being away—he and his sister and Kitty were so remarkably cozy together, and Kitty seemed so mild, and so very much in need of comfort, that he felt his heart warming towards her wonderfully; and, in the evening, when Mrs. Jefferson had gone upstairs to fetch some more handkerchiefs to hem, and Kitty and he were left alone, he did actually "spread the matter before her," and ask her to take him as her husband. Kitty was overcome—thought at first that she was dreaming—that it was altogether out of the question—that she could never even mention such a thing to

Sarah, &c., &c.; then she spoke of her early sorrows—her unfitness for everything—her poverty of spirit, &c., &c.; wept copiously, was gradually comforted by Samuel, and at length found that she certainly had the greatest regard, esteem, and even affection for the good man to whom she had all her life looked for advice and support in all difficulties and perplexities—at least such as were not of an æsthetic nature—found, indeed, that she liked him as well, possibly better, than any one else in the world, and that the prospect of spending the remainder of her days with him, instead of with Sister Sarah, was very comfortable, although she knew he was not at all romantic, and would not in the least understand half the fancies and ideas which she so often revelled in. True, she shed some more tears over the early love and the blighted youth, but they were quiet tears, largely mixed with consolation, as they fell softly on the kind and most substantial hand which held her own; and she felt that until it should please God by death to separate them, she would find in Samuel Ward the support, the guidance, and the comfort which her timid, frightened nature so much needed and had so long craved.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

WE must now return to Mr. Maunders, who, to the accompaniment of many expletives, to which Samuel Ward would have much objected, did, at length, after much buckling, and unbuckling, fitting, and refitting, of the Doctor's harness, tackle Jane to his car: the poor beast, however, suffered seriously by the change of accoutrements—the harness hanging loose in some places, and being tight almost beyond endurance in others.

"It can't be helped, Jane, girl," said her master, as they proceeded down towards the town; "but Heaven send we'll soon come up with the Captain, and then you'll have a rest and a feed, please goodness."

Driving first to Colonel Ashton's, he was told that Captain Jefferson was not there, but would surely be found at the

Castle, whither all the military then in Glarisford had gone, to attend upon the departure of the Lord Lieutenant.

"Weary take him for a Lord Lieutenant," muttered Richard Maunders, as he drove back along the Quays, which were at present the least crowded parts of the town, there being scarcely any stir beside the river-shore, except near a heavy-looking steamer, where a little crowd of emigrants, with their luggage, was collected.

Amongst these he saw, to his surprise, Nance Ryan, seated on a large deal trunk, a still larger one beside her, and a bundle in her hand, looking altogether as if she were bound for the far West, as well as the others whom he knew to be emigrants on their way to Liverpool, in order there to take ship for America.

"Well, Nanch, woman," he said, drawing up his horse, "what the mischief brings you here to-day, afther Mr. Julian lendin' you the carts for to take y'r sticks of furniture up to Ballynock?"

Nance scowled fiercely, but it was before she turned her face toward the steward; when he saw her countenance, it bore the expression of injured innocence, which she had of late often assumed.

"Oh aye," she said, "Pether's got the carts, an' him an' Peg's gone up to Ballynock; but sure, no Christhan w'd prevint a poor ould body comin' to see the last of her own flesh an' blood that's to be off to the New Mericas afore night."

"She don't go down the river till twelve," said a sailor who stood by; "the tide won't serve till late to-night."

"Oh, musha! who cares when she sails?" ejaculated the woman, angrily.

"Which of y'r flesh an' blood's for going to-night, anyway?" asked Richard Maunders; "I never heard of your setting much store by 'em afore. Have ye got 'em in them big boxes?"

"Oh, you ould varmint!" muttered Nance; then putting a great restraint upon herself, she said aloud, "Me sister's goin', who else? an' takin' all her little childher with her, an' lef' me here to watch her luggage for her till she'd bring 'em down."

The steward would have made further enquiries into Nance Ryan's prospects and intentions, but that, just at that moment, he saw Captain Jefferson, and one or two officers, riding rapidly along the Quay, and turning up a street which led to the Castle.

"If I'd jest gone on at once I'd have met him all right," he said to himself, as with a touch of his whip he caused his animal to proceed as quickly as she was able.

"Nanch has a sisther in town, I know, and as soon as iver I've spoken to the Captain, I'll go an' see whether it's true she's on the move, an' if not, why I'll call the peelers, and have them boxes searched."

It was with much difficulty that Richard Maunders made his way even along the side street which led to the square, but when he had done so, he saw that it would be utterly impossible for him to cross to the Castle gates, which were on the opposite side, so dense was the crowd of civilians, country people, military, constabulary, in vehicles of all descriptions, on horseback, and on foot.

The Lord Lieutenant, the Marquis, and all the notabilities, were, he was told, just about to set forth for the Railway Terminus.

"I'll jest go there by one of the back streets," said Mr. Maunders, as he turned his horse. "Bad luck to their drums and their fifes, and their cannons! I'm in no heart for such cat-er-hauling to-day. I'm blest if Nanch ain't up to the worst of devilment."

He had reached the open space before the Railway Terminus, and was endeavouring to get as close as he could to the steps leading up under the portico, when the cavalcade from the Castle was said to be approaching. Then there was a rush of policemen to clear an open space for the carriages, and Maunders was obliged to back his mare some yards, whilst at the same time the crowd thickened all around him, and he and his car were inextricably blocked up, without hope of escape, until Lord Carlisle's departure; and after all, this had been but a false alarm, as to the approach of the Viceroy, but for nearly an hour he was expected momentarily, and during this time no person, or at least no vehicle, was allowed to move from the position first taken; and even when Lord Carlisle had



arrived at the terminus, when the parting address had been read, the farewell cannon fired from the heights of Glarisford Castle, and the express train steamed out of the station, Richard Maunders seemed little nearer to his object than when he had that forenoon left Holybrook Abbey, although across the seething platform of crowded cars, uneasy horses, and swearing drivers, he did once catch a glimpse of Captain Jefferson, as he rode away along with Colonel Ashton and the officers of his staff. It was near four o'clock before Mr. Maunders was able to extricate himself and his car from the corner into which they had been pushed. It is not to be supposed that the steward bore this delay with the most exemplary patience, but we need not dwell upon his sorrows, nor yet on the very strong expressions by which he relieved his troubled spirit; when at length he succeeded in extricating himself from the crowd, he drove back at once to Colonel Ashton's house, where he arrived about half-past four o'clock hot and angry, both with annoyance and with the increasing difficulty which he experienced in propelling his tired and ill-accounted horse.

"Yes," the footman said in answer to his enquiries—Captain Jefferson had been at the house not a quarter of an hour ago, but had ridden out with Miss Ashton, the Colonel, and some others; he thought they had taken the road toward Arranmore, and they must come back the same way, unless they took the bog road, which was very unlikely. "You'll be sure to meet them if you just drive on a piece."

"There's nothin' else for it, I suppose," said the steward; and with a faint chirp and a touch of the whip, not at all so faint, he again put Jane in motion.

For three miles along the road to Arranmore there was not a human being to be seen; the inhabitants, small and great, had all gone in to Glarisford, and the country looked quite deserted. He had now reached the little road which led across the bog, and seeing neither the riders nor any one of whom he could make enquiries respecting them, he turned down this road, knowing that even if it were in worse repair, it was at least as short as that by which he had come. For the last mile Jane had been objecting, more or less decidedly, to proceed, but having advanced some perches along the rough bog road, she altogether declined to go further, and being

urged to do so by her master, she quietly seated herself on the road, dog-like, her fore-quarters being still erect.

"Well, that beats all!" said Richard Maunders, alighting from the car, the better to view his quadruped. "Jane, you look like a Christian; but this won't do: we must go for'ard."

Nothing, however, would induce the animal to rise until, on examining the harness, Mr. Maunders found that the poor thing was cut in several places, and must have suffered sorely before she took this final seat. Undoing the buckles and fastenings, he took her by the head, and panting, and much wearied himself, he led her to a farm-house, which was at a short distance further on the road.

He knew the farmer—was aware that he kept a car and horse, and hoped he might be able to borrow a harness, or some means of returning to Glarisford, as Jane would not bear him on her back; and walk he could not. There was, however, neither man nor horse about the farm; the only occupant was an old woman, who told him that her husband and all the boys had gone to town to see his Excellency go off, and would not be back till nine or ten o'clock.

She invited him to put up his beast in the stable, and come into the kitchen himself: she was just about to have her tea, and asked him to take a cup, and some of the fresh cakes which she was baking on the griddle.

There was nothing else for it, and Mr. Maunders, being very hungry, accepted the woman's kind offer; he put up his poor tired horse to rest and eat in the stable, whilst he himself enjoyed the meal, to which the kindly farmer's wife added several slices of fat bacon.

There we shall leave him, and there he remained until a late hour that night.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

EFFIE and Ellen Walker, although young and healthy, were unaccustomed either to late hours or prolonged dancing, such as they took part in on the night of the Marquis's ball. It was half-past three in the morning when Wilfred Grey brought

his nieces home to Rose Cottage, and Margaret allowed them to sleep on, until long after the usual breakfast hour—they did not indeed make their appearance until very near the time of their grandfather's early dinner.

"Well-a-day!" exclaimed the old man, as the girls entered the dining-room: "Are not these pretty hours for my granddaughters to keep?—to bed at four o'clock in the morning, and up at two in the day! Now come and tell me all about it, and who were your beaux? Nell, I hear, wouldn't be satisfied with less than one of his Excellency's aides-de-camp, all covered with lace! Why weren't you up in time to see him off, Nell? They are all going, just about now, I suppose, for even my old ears can, now and then, catch the hubbub that's going on in town. By the way, I wonder neither of the young men from the Abbey offered to escort you into town, that you might see all the sport. It's well they didn't, or what would they have thought of your not being out of your beds. Maunders was here though, looking for them; he said he was sure he'd have found them, one or both—Maunders is an outspoken man—too outspoken maybe——"

"Jenny saw Mr. Maunders, he went from this to the Barracks," said Margaret; "Julius was sure to have some military duties to-day."

"Of course, of course," said Mr. Grey; "Julius is not the man to leave the girls in the lurch without some good cause; and as for poor Julian, he cares little for such affairs; he seemed quite moped and done up with only a couple of hours of the ball last night: *he's* no ladies' man, I can tell you girls. Take my advice, and don't either of you fall in love with him; he'll be like the good man that forgot his wedding-day, and when the bride's friends went to look for him they found him on the railway platform just starting on an archaeological tour. What's this Maunders was telling me about him? Ah, I forget; but I'll remember some other time. Come, Effie, I want to hear all about the ball, and after dinner you must read the *Times* to me—I've got all through the *Glarisford Post*, and my poor old eyes are tired."

Effie was able to give her grandfather all the particulars of the ball, to tell all about Lord Carlisle—how he had looked; what orders he wore; who he had danced with; and when he

had retired. Also, who had been the principal guests; how the rooms had been decorated; whether the supper had been good, &c., &c.

"You look more tired than Effie," said Mr. Grey to Ellen, as they rose from the dinner table. "Have you over-danced yourself, my pet?"

"Oh no, grandpapa," replied Ellen; and while she spoke the quick blood rushed back to her cheeks, which before had been rather pale. "I never was less tired in my life; I could dance to-night again, if there was another ball."

"Ah, well, dear, you don't look tired now; it was only that moment when I looked at you, I thought you appeared a little overdone, a little sorrowful, perhaps."

"Sorrowful! grandpapa?" she repeated, with a strange little ring in her voice, "what should make *me* sorrowful?" and then she went on at length to justify herself from such a charge, much to the mystification of her grandfather, who felt quite relieved when she turned quickly, and left the room, just in the midst of declaring how "very, very much she had enjoyed the ball."

As Mr. Grey returned slowly to the drawing-room, Margaret detained Effie, who was about to follow him.

"Effie, darling," she said, "I feel very unhappy about Ellen. I cannot understand her strange manner. She wishes us to think that she is in such high spirits, and yet at times, when she believes herself unobserved, she looks troubled and weary."

"She appeared to enjoy the ball excessively last night," replied Effie, "but perhaps she has been over-excited. She looked lovely, Aunt Margaret, and she was greatly admired; I think she did not sit still during one of the dances."

"But why did not Julia take care that she did not fatigue herself? Effie, I believe I should have gone with you. Your mother will not think I am taking sufficient care of her girls."

"Dear Aunt Margaret, we were taken every care of, and our partners were all people of whom you would have approved. I am sure—" Effie paused—"at least I hope, Nell is only suffering from the unusual excitement."

"I don't know, Effie, I feel to-day as if everything were going wrong. But tell me, dear. I could not understand

what Aunt Kitty said about it. Did Ellen not wear her pink tarlatan?"

"No," replied Effie, colouring deeply. "She had another, a pink-and-white dress; it was very pretty."

"And how did she obtain it? She said nothing of it to me before the ball."

"She did not tell me that she had it, either. I did not see it until she was dancing; but she had said before that she would not wear the pink tarlatan."

"Could your uncle Wilfred have given it to her?"

"Perhaps so. I hope so," said Effie. She more than suspected who was the real donor of the dress, but she tried not to give credence to her suspicions, and she was glad that Margaret did not continue the subject, only saying—

"I shall ask Wilfred, and I think I shall scold him, for Fanny will, I fear, be hurt. Did Ellen sleep well, do you know?"

"I cannot say. She was dressed before I wakened."

"Effie!" said Margaret, after a pause, "Do you really think it is only the excitement of last night which makes Ellen's manner so strange? Even yesterday she seemed to me not like the same girl I had left a month ago. You have heard, I suppose, that Julius's regiment is ordered abroad?"

"No," replied Effie, and there was a strange cold feeling about her heart. "Where is it ordered to?"

"To India, and at once."

"Does Ellen know?"

Margaret looked anxiously and enquiringly at her niece: then she said, "Effie dear, can my suspicions be correct? Is there—do you think there can be—any attachment between Julius and Ellen?"

"I—I—indeed, Aunt Margaret, I do not know. If it were any other person but Captain Jefferson I should say there was."

"But, dear Effie," said Margaret, looking still more distressed, "you do not think that Ellen has given him her affections unasked?"

"Oh, Aunt Margaret, you know Captain Jefferson's manner, and I have sometimes been afraid."

"Ah! how I wish I had not gone away; but if Ellen were

so foolish, and you saw it, surely you should have warned her."

Effie coloured painfully, then her cheeks grew paler than before, but she did not reply.

Margaret continued: "Did you ever fancy that Julian was attached to your sister?"

"Yes, I am sure he was, is, I fear; but Ellen has greatly changed towards him."

"Did she ever encourage his attentions, or give him reason to think that she returned his regard?"

"Oh yes!" exclaimed Effie, and then she paused, fearing to blame her sister.

"My dear child," said Margaret, "surely you need not hesitate to tell me all, you know how dearly I love Ellen."

"She did appear to like him very much," continued Effie, with a rather faltering voice, "until Captain Jefferson came back to Holybrook, then she changed. I think, Aunt Margaret, that she did not quite know her own mind—I think——"

"Effie! Effie!" called Mr. Grey, from the drawing-room. "What keeps you, my dear? I am tired waiting for you."

Effie hastened to her grandfather, leaving Margaret harassed and perplexed, wondering what would be her right course under the circumstances, and sorely grieving that she had not known all this before.

Ellen Walker had taken refuge in an ivy-covered arbour, which was at the further end of her grandfather's little garden. It was near the gate which led out to the public road, but shaded from it by a thick screen of evergreens, and was cool and pleasant within, although the sun shone full and warm upon the flower beds close by, drawing out the delicious perfume of the large Brompton stocks which grew around, looking like cushions of crimson, white, and purple flowers.

Ellen had left the dining-room because, for some reason scarcely known to herself, she found it impossible to repress her tears. "For," she said, when she was alone, "what in the whole world have I to cry about? I must be getting nervous like Aunt Kitty"—and then she laughed a little short, heartless laugh—"I am not unhappy, far from it;" and, in

truth, there were so many strange sensations of triumph and excitement seething on the surface of her heart, covering as it were with their deceitful glittering foam the real feelings which lay beneath, that the poor girl mistook them for happiness. She had wished of all things that she might have an opportunity of telling Julian what was her real estimate of his attentions, and she had had that opportunity, and made him feel, too, that she was not the weak, impressible girl they all believed her to be. "That vulgar priest, and that low-minded steward, and—and—no, I will not think about them now," and with an effort she turned her thoughts from that subject, but only to light, almost unexpectedly to herself, on the gay and costly dress which she had taken off as soon as she came home, and crushing its delicate folds into the large press in her room, had locked it up, wishing that she might never see it again. Had not Captain Jefferson's manner been some way changed last night? He was always a gentleman; but had not there been something, just the slightest tinge of annoyance, or something else, she did not know what, in his manner to her? but no; he had treated her with great confidence. He had told her how soon he was going to India—told her how much he felt in the prospect of leaving Glarisford because—she could not just recollect the words, but the substance of what he said was—because he was attached to some lady, he did not say who; perhaps he would have told her, but that just then supper was announced. Did Julian know this? did he know, too, about Captain Jefferson giving her the dress. She recollected—and as she did so, she felt her cheeks grow hot—she recollected that the desire to annoy him had been one of her motives in receiving it; and had he all the time known about Julius's attachment to some one else? Just then, Ellen saw a little below the superficial triumph and excitement, and not liking the view, she opened the book which she had brought with her; as she did so, a look of pain crossed her face. She had intended to bring with her a novel from the Circulating Library, but had taken instead the "Idylls of the King," which had lain on the same table—the very book which Julian had been reading aloud on that last evening when she sketched the Abbey ruins; the leaves opened, too, at the same place—the reconciliation of Enid and Geraint—a beautiful passage: one which had given

her intense pleasure, and in which there had always seemed to her to lie a deep, thrilling beauty, hidden underneath the touching and poetical words. But she could not bear them now; she closed the book with a shudder; laid it on the rustic seat beside her, and gazed sadly out upon the blooming flowers, which sunned themselves in the beds before the arbour. Little birds were hopping to and fro—their nests were in the ivied wall close by—and bees were humming busily amongst the flowers. Two tiny woodpeckers had built their nest inside the arbour, behind one of the rustic poles. They flitted round and round doubtfully for some time, fearful of showing their little dwelling to a human eye; then seeing how quietly Ellen sat, and perhaps thinking in their small minds that she was likely to remain there for ever, and that during that period the young woodpeckers would die of starvation, one of the parents ventured in, and deposited a fly in a yellow mouth, which had been long waiting to receive it. Finding that this act was performed with perfect impunity, the old birds soon lost all fear, and flitted backward and forward continually, with now a moth, now a midge, now a long-legged fly, to satisfy the perpetual hunger of the gaping brood. "Poor little birds! happy little birds!" thought Ellen, as she watched the proceedings of the little brown-coated, white-shirted creatures; "I almost wish I were a woodpecker, then I could fly away, and no one would ever see me again."

Just then the little iron gate swung to, and in another moment Terence Drumgoole, the priest of Ballynock, emerged from behind the screen of evergreens. He would have gone straight up to the Cottage, but that, being a lover of flowers, he was attracted by the beautiful stocks, and turned his head toward the arbour, so catching sight of Ellen. Saluting her with one of his best bows, he said, "Your servant, Miss. I looked round to view those gorgeous flowers, and saw one still more lovely."

Ellen had risen, and with heightened colour and a look of some annoyance stood in the rustic door as she coldly returned his greeting.

The priest observed the blush, and misinterpreting it glanced beyond her into the bower, as if expecting to find that she was not alone. "I was hoping," he said, "that, as was natural, I



might find the young gentleman here, though, I'm sure, I'm the last man in the world to interrupt an interesting conversation, only when the matter might be vital. Is he long gone, Miss?"

"Who do you mean?" asked Ellen, haughtily.

"Mr. Julian, Miss. I was full sure I'd find him here; is he in the house?"

"If you mean Mr. Jefferson, I know nothing whatever about him."

"No, no, Miss Ellen, no, of course not; but when he calls, will you be so good as to give him this message from me—to stay with the Captain in town to-night, and not to go out to the Abbey by any manner of means till morning." Ellen did not deign any reply, and the priest proceeded—"There's no doubt but you'll tell him that, I'm sure, Miss. The Captain, I've been happy to discover, is to go to Dublin by the night mail, so he's all right, and there's no danger for Mr. Julian neither, only just for fear; so don't you be alarmed, Miss, only be sure to give him that message from me."

"I have told you before that Mr. Jefferson is not here," said Ellen.

"Yes, Miss Walker, certainly; but just when he comes you know. I wish you a good-day. I am hurrying to town, Miss;" and with another searching glance into the arbour Mr. Drumgoole departed.

"The insufferable creature!" Ellen said, almost aloud, as she saw him go; "he actually thinks that Julian Jefferson is here, and that I stood in the door to conceal him!" and she stamped her pretty foot on the pavement, and would have burst into a violent flood of tears, but that she saw Jenny Tuff coming down the garden towards the place where she stood.

The servant girl approached, holding up the corner of her apron to conceal something which she held in her hand. As she came close to the arbour, she looked cautiously over her shoulder to see that no person was watching, then drew a note from under her apron, and handing it to Ellen, "Mr. Maunders, Miss," she said, with a knowing nod of her head; "and, of course, you'll understand all about it—Mr. Julian, you know, Miss," another nod. "It's most particular; but Mr. Maunders, he was sure you'd attend to it."

The note was not sealed, and was addressed—"J. Jefferson, Esq., care of Miss Ellen Walker. Immediate." Ellen just glanced at this superscription as she took the note into her hand, then looking straight at Jenny, she tore the paper into fragments, and, scattering them on the ground, walked toward the house with stately steps.

"Laws alive!" exclaimed Jenny, as she looked after Ellen; "Aint she the pictur of the Thradgacy Queen I seen once when the play acthers were in town. What's up now I wondher?" Jenny Tuff could not read anything unless the print were large and clear, and the words short. She never attempted to read writing; but perhaps her respect for it was all the greater on that account. Stooping down, she gathered up the torn fragments—five in number—and pinning them together with one of those well-worn brassy pins, which are generally to be found in the possession of thrifty domestics, she carried them into the house, and placed them in a broken-nosed teapot, which stood on the top shelf of her own corner cupboard in the kitchen, intending to return them to Mr. Maunders when she should next meet him.

All that evening, and particularly at tea-time, Ellen appeared full of spirits—laughed, talked, described the people she had seen at the ball, related one amusing incident after another to the great delight of her grandfather, who, good man, laughed till he told her his "old sides ached, although she almost made him feel young again, and fancy he had seen all the fun himself, and danced as well as the best of them."

Margaret could not help smiling, too, although there was something almost painful to her, in Ellen's very amusing descriptions. Effie felt convinced that these high spirits were unnatural—a veil, she was sure, for the real ones, which Ellen would not permit even her own sister to approach—how could it be otherwise if she were really attached to Captain Jefferson? his regiment might not return for ten or twenty years. However, he was not going for some days, perhaps weeks, as far as she knew; much might happen in that time.

It was ten o'clock, and the little party at Rose Cottage, in consideration of the late hours which they had kept the preceding night, were thinking of retiring to rest, when there was a

knock at the door, and Captain Jefferson entered the drawing-room. "You will, I hope, excuse me," he said, "for calling at this unreasonably late hour, but until this moment I could not leave Colonel Ashton, and must return to him very soon again. I have come to bid you all good-bye—a long good-bye I fear. I am going to Dublin by the night mail, and I fear there is little probability of my returning to Glarisford before we leave finally for India."

Amid the expressions of sorrow and sympathy which followed, loudest from Mr. Grey, who had not before heard of this sudden summons—more sudden, indeed, than any, except Ellen, had expected—the young man listened eagerly for Effie's voice. He glanced at her, and her soft blue eyes returned the look; there was sympathy in them, certainly, but he could not see that there was more.

"I told the Colonel that I should be back immediately," said Julius, as he seated himself beside Ellen. "I have not even time to go out to the Abbey to-night; but I said that I must pay this one visit. Has Julian been here?"

"No," replied Margaret, "not to-day."

"He was in town with me, and is going to ride out to the Abbey to get a few of my traps, and to tell my poor mother of this sudden departure. He must come here for my keys."

"And your mother, Julius," said Margaret; "can you not see her before you go? she will be so much distressed."

"Yes, Margaret," said the young man, sorrowfully, "she will feel it more than any one else in the world; but she spoke of going to Dublin with Mr. Ward to see me off whenever this summons should come, so that I hope I shall see her there." He glanced at the piano, which was lying open, and said, "Might I ask a favour before I go?—one or two of the dear old songs: they will be still sounding in my ears when I am far away."

"Either of the girls will sing anything you wish," said Margaret, as neither of her nieces replied.

Ellen saw that the request was addressed to her sister, who was bending over her embroidery. Effie knew she could not sing just then, nor did she think that Julius had spoken to her.

The young man turned to Ellen, repeating his request. She readily complied, and had just taken her seat at the piano, and was turning over some music, when Julian Jefferson entered.

"You forgot to give me your keys, Julius," he said.

"I did not forget, old fellow, but I kept them as a pledge ; for otherwise I feared you would not come here before you rode out to the Abbey."

"I left your horse at Dr. Grant's," said Julian. "I told Dan he need not put him in the stable, as I should return in a few moments."

"All right, I shall go with you ; but sit down now, for Ellen has promised to sing for me before I go."

From the moment when Julian's knock was heard at the hall door a brilliant crimson had risen to Ellen's cheeks and there remained, making her look very lovely, although when he entered the room she greeted him coldly, almost slightly, and took little further notice of him while he remained, all her attention being—poor silly girl—apparently devoted to his brother. Now, as Captain Jefferson spoke she looked up into his face with a bright smile, saying, "What shall I sing ? you have a right to choose."

"Nay, the choice must be yours," said Captain Jefferson, rather absently, but at the same time he rose, and going forward to the piano, stood beside Ellen, looking down at the pretty fingers as they moved lightly over the keys. After a few short notes of prelude, she thus sang—it was an old but not very familiar song :—

"Fare you well, love, now you're going,  
O'er the wild and trackless sea ;  
Smooth be the waves, and fair the wind blowing,  
Though to bear you far from me.

"But when on the waste of ocean  
Some happy, homeward-bound bark you see,  
Swear by the truth of your heart's devotion  
To send a long letter back to me.

"Think on the shores you have left behind you,  
Even when seeking a brighter strand ;  
Let not the golden glories blind you,  
Of that gorgeous Indian land.

"Send me not its diamond treasures,  
Nor pearls from the depths of its sunny sea;  
But tell me all your woes and pleasures  
In a long letter back to me.

"To say that soon your sail will be flowing  
Homeward, to bear you over the sea,  
Calm be the waves, and soft the wind blowing,  
For oh! you are coming back to me."

Margaret, during the progress of this song, felt herself grow hot and cold—she could scarcely credit her own hearing. Even Ellen's engagement—if she were engaged—to Julius must be of very short duration, and, in any case, could she not know that this display of feeling or effusion of sentiment, or whatever it might be called, was, to say the least of it, bad taste, as well as very much out of place. What, thought Margaret, can be poor Julian's feelings? and as for the elder brother, to whom the song was evidently addressed, she knew, by a slight, almost imperceptible movement of his foot that he was not altogether pleased.

Effie worked with exceeding diligence at her embroidery, not daring to look up; while Mr. Grey, watching Ellen, wondered at the brightness of her eyes, and the crimson glow in her cheeks, and as the song proceeded, thought it seemed so very much to the purpose, that Captain Jefferson and Ellen must "understand one another;" thought, too, that they might have told him something of it before; he looked to his daughter, in quest of some explanation, but Margaret's anxious face told nothing.

When Ellen had ended, Julian rose hastily from his seat, and, approaching his brother, said, "It is getting late, Julius, and I must go; you have no further messages to Holybrook, I suppose?"

"Yes, I have a great number. I shall walk down with you to Dr. Grant's, and—and—" he continued, turning to the little party assembled in Mr. Grey's drawing-room—"perhaps I may return—no, it would be too late; but come what may, I shall return before I leave Ireland finally: this shall not be a last farewell."

"Well, well, my boy," said Mr. Grey, "you may be sure, I think, of meeting a warm welcome here whenever you come;

but, at all events, don't stay too long in India ; no one knows what might happen while you are away."

Margaret accompanied the young men to the hall door ; when she returned, Ellen was arranging the music in the large portfolio, while, at the same time, she hummed to herself snatches of some gay little air.

"Has she no feeling?" thought Margaret, as she watched her niece ; "or, if she have, what re-action will follow this?"

Ellen closed the piano, and, with a cheerful "good-night" to all, left the room.

"I must go and speak to her," thought Margaret ; "what is the source of this unnatural gaiety, and that strange look of triumph in her face?"

It was about five minutes after when she knocked at Ellen's door. As she turned the handle she almost hoped that she might find her in tears, but it was not so. Ellen sat beside the dressing-table, her long dark hair unbound and falling over her shoulders ; a smile played round her mouth as she undid one of the thick plaits.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked, looking up, as her aunt entered. "I wish I could have you photographed, Aunt Mag : you look as if you expected to find the room on fire."

"Dear Nell!" said Margaret, as she laid her hand on the dressing-table, "I did not like to go to bed without seeing you again."

"How kind of you!" said Ellen, in a tone which grated still more on Margaret's feelings.

"I wish to speak to you, Ellen."

"Oh, I am quite too sleepy to speak : you know I have had little or no rest for the last forty-eight hours."

"You do not look sleepy, Nell," said Margaret, laying her hand on the girl's shining head.

"Do I not?" said Ellen, at the same time drawing back from the caress.

"Are you well, dear?"

"Yes, as well as I ever was in my life, but longing to be in bed;" and gathering her loose tresses, she fastened them up tightly at the back of her head, and began hastily to undress herself.

"I saw Captain Jefferson and Julian after they left the drawing-room," said Margaret, after a pause. "From what they say, I fear it will be impossible for Julius to return as he promised; Julian thinks that it will not be in his power to do so."

"Indeed! and does Mr. Jefferson wish his brother not to return? very brotherly, is it not?"

Margaret sat down on the nearest chair, and wished with all her heart that Ellen was at home with her mother, or, better still, that she had never left her natural care-takers.

"Ellen," she said, "I cannot bear this light manner, and this heartless way of speaking. I know that you are aware of Julian's affection for you. That you do not return his regard I also believe—you yourself know whether you ever gave him cause to think that you did—but how could you, under any circumstances, bear to wound his feelings, as you have this evening, in every way which was in your power? No matter on what terms you stand with Julius, you were very wrong to sing that song to-night. If, as I cannot but suppose from all that has passed, you have engaged yourself to Captain Jefferson, I could not have supposed, dear Nell, that you could have borne thus to wound his gentle, generous brother. And now, in your mother's absence, I do expect, and have a right to ask you to tell me all. You are very young and inexperienced, dear child, and you may be preparing for yourself great unhappiness."

Ellen turned her head, and for a moment gazed at her aunt's anxious, pleading face, then, with a low laugh, she said, "I am too sleepy to talk about such serious things to-night, Aunt Mag; as you say, I am young, and not so well experienced in hearts and darts, and all such fine things, as you are."

Margaret felt so pained that she could not trust her voice to reply. She rose from her chair and moved toward the door; then she paused and said, "One thing, Ellen, I must request, that when Julian Jefferson next comes here, you will not act towards him as you have done to-night."

"Julian Jefferson need not come here any more," said Ellen, pertly.

"Good Heavens!" thought Margaret; "what has so metamorphosed the girl? I can scarcely believe that this is the same bright, sweet Nelly whom I left a month ago." Then she

said, aloud, "I think, Ellen, that you forget what you are saying. You have, I fear, already, by your own conduct, forfeited even Julian's esteem; but, remember, he shall come here as often, and whenever he pleases. Your grandfather and I are always glad to see him, and you, or any other person staying in our house, must treat him with the respect and consideration which is his due."

"Oh!" said Ellen, in the same pert voice, "I'm sure I don't wish to deprive you of your *rara avis*; but you must not expect me to give him my respect and consideration: I fancy I know his value better than you do."

Margaret would hear no more: she went out of the room, and closed the door without saying another word.

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### CHAPTER XXXIII.

It was almost midnight when Margaret Grey went to her own room, but late as was the hour, she could not yet think of sleep: too many causes of disquietude and uneasiness were pressing upon her mind.

There are times when all the sorrows of the past rise up before us a ghastly legion, not mellowed by distance, nor softened by the kindly hand of Time, but rather exaggerated and made more fearful by the magnifying and distorting medium of some present trouble, which, linking itself to the past, seems to bridge over the intervening spaces of rest, or even happiness, thus making our lives appear one dreary waste of sorrow after sorrow, while at the same time seeming to shut out hope and promise from the future.

Thank God, such periods as these do not continue long to oppress anyone whose mind has not altogether lost its balance, nor their soul its trust in a righteous and over-ruling Providence. Such a time came to Margaret now, as seating herself beside the open window, through which the calm night air was stealing, she rested her forehead on her hands, while sorrows, fears, anxieties, and self-reproaches crowded through her mind, unaccompanied by one pleasant memory of the past, or one bright hope for the future.



She thought of her own blighted hopes—of the sorrow which had all but unhinged her reason—of the long, sad years which had followed. Then her mind reverted to Julian—he who had always seemed to her more than a brother. It had been Theodore's dying, almost his last charge to her, that she should watch over and care for the delicate, shrinking lad as he himself had always done.

Her affection for him was more that of a mother than a sister. Why should his young life be clouded thus, at its very outset, by the caprice of a heartless, giddy girl? His love—no light and passing fancy, but the lasting affection of a true and steadfast nature—scorned, almost scoffed at. If Ellen had found it impossible to return his affection, and from the first had shown a preference for his brother, Margaret could not blame her so much; but it had not been so. She had suspected this, even before she had gone to Lowbridge with her father, and Effie had confirmed her belief. "I did suspect—I almost knew that he loved her," she said to herself, with a shudder; "then am not I myself most to blame? I should not have left Ellen, so thoughtless and volatile as I knew her to be, poor, beautiful girl! and what is before her now?—at the best, long, long years of waiting and watching, even if Julius loves her now, and of that I am very doubtful, nay, I am almost sure that he does not. He has flirted and laughed and danced away his idle hours, pleased with the companionship and the evident preference of so fair a creature; but that is all. As gay, as thoughtless and free of heart as ever, he will sail away and think no more of her, whilst if she really loves him—my poor, poor Ellen! and if I had remained I might have warned her—have averted all this—for I think she preferred Julian at first."

A horse's feet were heard slowly coming up the road which led from the town. There was no moon, but it was not much more than a month from midsummer, and the night was light, as well as bright with stars. Margaret could easily discern that the rider was Julian Jefferson.

He paused for a moment when he reached the little gate, and looked up at the windows of the Cottage. All was dark, for everyone had retired to rest except Margaret, and she had not lighted a candle. Her eyes, accustomed to the dim twilight

and starlight, could easily discern objects, even at some distance: she saw that he was mounted on his brother's fine charger, which pawed the ground as he stopped.

Another moment and he had ridden on, and giving the reins to the impatient steed he was soon out of sight. But ere the sound of the horse's feet was altogether lost, Margaret heard a car come up the road—it passed the Cottage. "Mr. Maunders," she said to herself; "surely that is Mr. Maunders: I could not mistake him nor his steady horse and car, and that must be Mr. Drumgoole along with him. What can they have been doing so late in town?—with poor Julius, I daresay. Jenny said they were both here to-day looking for him and for Julian, but I did not see them."

The clock struck one. Margaret undressed herself and retired to bed, still leaving the window wide open, for the night was very mild and balmy.

Soon dropping into an uneasy slumber, wild and eerie visions crowded round her—the past, the present, and the future, all mingled together in inextricable confusion, and all full of some indefinable terror, till at last the other two were swallowed up in a fearful and definite present, as she saw Ellen carried away on the back of a fierce centaur-like creature, whose head bore a wild resemblance to that of Julius Jefferson, and the furious clatter of whose hoofs still sounded in her ears, as she sprang from her couch, and was again beside the open window before waking consciousness had quite returned, and she found that it was only a dream.

The clatter of the horse's hoofs was, however, a reality, for although more distant, they still sounded sharp and clear upon the dry, hard road. They stopped, and then in the silence of the night she could hear a loud, imperative knocking. It must be at Dr. Grant's door: some sudden call for his assistance. Then there was silence again. The dawn was breaking, and a fresh, sweet breath of coming day floated in the air. A few birds rustled beneath the window; then there was a twitter, then a song. A cuckoo toward the country cried to its fellow, who answered from a still further distance—all nature was waking to the joy of another summer day; but each little sound, which would at any other time have been so welcome and so beautiful, seemed now only painful interruptions, as Margaret, holding her

hands over her tumultuously-beating heart, scarcely seemed to breathe, so intent was she on catching whatever sound might follow. She felt that it was a foolish nervousness, but she could not conquer it. For some moments she could distinguish nothing clearly: then the horse's hoofs were heard again upon the road towards Glarisford, but still receding. Then she heard the sound of approaching wheels; another moment, and Dr. Grant's gig drove past at furious speed, Black Sally spurning the road behind her as she stretched her long legs in full gallop.

"Good God! what can it be?" exclaimed Margaret. "If Wilfred, Julia, Fanny, any of them were ill, they surely would let us know: they will perhaps send." With trembling hands she began to dress herself, and she had scarcely finished doing so, when again the sound of horses' feet was heard approaching, more numerous now, and louder than before. Hastening to the window, she saw a large body of mounted police pass at full gallop. It was now light enough to distinguish every object, even the faces of the men, distinctly, and she saw with increasing terror that Captain Jefferson, and the surgeon of the — Regiment, were also in the company. It was but an instant and they had all passed, and the beautiful dawn was as peaceful, as quiet as ever: the birds singing their matins from bush and tree, and the sweet sounds of reviving nature breathing softly all around. She wrapped a shawl about her, and, following her first impulse, hastened to her father's room. She opened his door softly; the old man was sleeping calmly and quietly as if he were a little child. Why should she rouse him? What could he do? Closing the door again, she stood alone upon the lobby, and felt as if her senses and her power of thought were deserting her. The fearful time—the day of unutterable anguish, when she had seen her best beloved snatched from her by a fearful and sudden death, seemed to return, and for the moment paralyse all power of thought or action. It was but for a moment: rallying her energies with a strong effort, she tried to suppress these feelings. Whoever was ill, or whatever had happened, she might be required at Holybrook: she might be sent for at any moment—nay, whether sent for or not, she must go there as soon as it was possible. She was descending the stairs, feeling that at

the house door she might see or hear something more, when she met Jenny Tuff, fully dressed, emerging from her own regions.

"Miss Margot! my goodness, Miss!" exclaimed the servant; "you look like a ghost! I'm scared enough myself, Heaven knows."

"What can be the matter, Jenny? Did you see all the people pass?"

"Deed I did, Miss, every sowl on 'em—Docthers, Peelers, an' all; but don't look so scarred, Miss. Sure maybe it's Mr. Maunders has got a 'perplexity, or somethin' that away."

"The police, Jenny! you forget the police."

"Oh!" said Jenny, rather puzzled in her office of comforter. "Maybe he done it on himself, an' they're goin' to have a quest; or may be some o' them has broken into his Riverence's house agen. But they'll know what it's all about at the Docther's, so I'll jest run down an' ask. Whisht," she continued, as a whistle was heard not far off; "call me a Dutchman if that aint Dan Corr." Jenny was not mistaken, for as she and her mistress hastened to the door, they saw Dr. Grant's man walking leisurely along the road. His hands were buried in the depths of his pockets, and at intervals he whistled scraps of some melancholy tune. "Dan! Dan!" Jenny called, in a harsh whisper, meant to be so modulated as not to disturb the house.

Dan stopped at the gate, while Jenny ran down the walk, and Margaret followed.

"What's up, Dan," asked the former; is anything wrong?"

"Wrong!" repeated Dan. "Haith an' you may take yer Davy there's something wrong when you see the mather killin' Black Sally that away. They've been and murdered Mr. Julian, that's what's wrong. Didn't Maunders find him lyin' by the Abbey gate in a pool of blood big enough to drown him, if he hadn't got his death afore, an' the Captain's horse shot dead beside him; an' his Riverence, he saw Pether Ryan cuttin' across a field near by; but all the Peelers is out, an' they'll have him if he was the mischief himself."

Jenny screamed loudly, with no thought now as to who she terrified or aroused from sleep.

"Is he dead?" was all Margaret's tightening lips could utter.

"There was life in him when the messenger come," replied Dan; "but in course he's dead by this time, for they said his jug'lar was shot through and through."

"Dan," said Margaret, "you must walk with me to Holybrook."

"I will in welcome, Miss; but there'll be no soart of use in it here nor there."

"I must go. I shall be ready in a moment;" and turning, she walked hastily back to the Cottage.

"What good'll the likes of her do among all the Docthers an' Peelers," said Dan, as he took a straw and leisurely chewed, leaning at the same time against the garden wall.

"What good'll she do!" repeated Jenny, defiantly; "more good, maybe, nor all the Docthers an' Peelers put together, an' more 'n you could do in your whole born days, you big dun-dherhead, an' what's more I'm goin' too."

"Aye that!" said Dan, in his softest tones; "lave you alone for fancyin' to take a walk into the country of a fine summer mornin' along wid a brave, likely boy. An what w'd you say now if I was for to go on to Ballynock an' get his Riverence to have us 'called' in chapel next Sunday! eh, Jenny?"

"Get along out o' this you ondacent lump!" cried Jenny; "jibin' like that, an' the fine young gentleman out yon struck down jest in the height of his performance. I'm goin' to take care of Miss Margot, that's what I'm going for; an' I'll jest tell you now for good an' all, I'll have nothin' more to say to you. I'd have been ashamed to 've come into the world at all if I hadn't had no better errand nor to marry the likes of you: not a 'dividual ha'penny of my money will you ever see, or my name's not Jane Tuff. Coort Anne Dempsey as hard as you like, for not a trawneen do I care; when I takes my money out of the bank it won't be for to purchase the likes of you for a husband, and his Riverence knows that too, for I tould him. Wait here now to Miss Margot, an' I are ready to be escorted out to the Abbey." So saying, Jenny, with head erect, followed her mistress in-doors.

Jenny's scream had awakened both the girls in Rose Cottage,

but not the old man : he still slept soundly. On the landing at the head of the stairs Margaret met Effie ; Ellen stood at the door of her own bedroom. "What has happened?" Effie asked. "Are you ill, Aunt Margaret? Is grandpapa ill?"

Effie was nearest to her, and whether for this reason or some other, Margaret turned to her, and away from Ellen as she said, "We are all well here; but—Julian—Julian is dying—dead, I believe—they have murdered him."

"Who? what? Oh! Aunt Margaret," cried Effie, at the same time throwing her arms around Margaret, who trembled so that she could scarcely stand. "Julian dying! murdered!"

"Yes, fearfully wounded by Ryan, who, no doubt, has mistaken him for Julius, and thought that this night was his last chance for vengeance. Oh! why did we not foresee; was there no one to warn him?—Mr. Drumgoole, Maunders, surely they might have watched that wretched man! I am going to Holybrook at once."

"You are not able, Aunt Margaret," said Effie, following her as she went into her own room.

"Yes, dear, I am quite able—quite strong now: I must see him, and I may be able to do something for him, though I have no hope—not of his ultimate recovery. He has no strength to rally after such a shock, even if the wounds were not so serious, and the loss of blood less."

"But you will not go alone?"

"No; Dan Corr will go with me: he is waiting outside."

"And me too, ma'am," said Jenny, appearing at the door.

"Oh no, Jenny, there is no occasion."

"I'm goin', ma'am," said Jenny, in a voice of calm decision.

"Do let her go, Aunt Margaret," said Effie; "it is so much better, and she can come back soon and bring us some account of Julian."

"Very well, dear. There, that will do," said Margaret, as Effie, who had brought her shawl and hat, was pinning the shawl closely across her aunt's chest—for beautiful as the morning was, Margaret shivered from head to foot. As they

were leaving the house, Margaret said, "I leave everything to your management, my darling; watch till your grandfather awakes, and then tell him as quietly as possible; and Ellen—where is Ellen? Perhaps she is sleeping still; but I thought I saw her." Then kissing Effie, Margaret, followed by her faithful Jenny, hastened down to the road, where Dan Corr awaited their coming.

Effie, too, was certain that she had seen Ellen; but from the time when Margaret told the dreadful tidings, she had not given a thought to any other subject; now, however, a new apprehension made her hasten to her sister's room.

Ellen had slept heavily for the few hours which she had been in bed, for feverish and excited as she was, she was young, and bodily weariness had conquered everything besides.

She had been roused by Jenny's scream, and springing out of bed was hastening to know its cause, when she saw Margaret coming up the stairs, and knowing that her aunt was, and had good cause to be, displeased with her, she shrank back within her own room; standing there just within the door she heard the terrible words—"Julian is dying—dead, I believe—they have murdered him." She would have cried aloud in her agony; but Margaret spoke still—"Was there no one to warn him? Mr. Drumgoole or Maunders might have watched—" Then the events of the past day rushed to her mind: the priest's message—Mr. Maunders's note.

"I—I—I—" she thought she spoke almost in a scream; but if any person had been listening they would only have heard a stifled gasping. No one was listening, for Margaret, Effie, even Jenny Tuff, had gone into a room at a little distance, and none heard or thought of Ellen. Her brain reeled, she clutched some object near her but it afforded no support, and she fell senseless on the floor. There Effie found her, senseless still, and cold almost as death itself. Poor Effie was terrified beyond expression: there was no assistance within reach, not a human being whom she could call, except the feeble infirm grandfather, whom Margaret had left in her especial charge. He still slept soundly, and it might be worse than useless to arouse him.

Kneeling down upon the floor, Effie lifted the poor, pale head upon her knee, and chafed the cold and tightening hands, whilst

she called upon her sister by every endearing epithet, hoping at first that it was only some stupor from which she might be thus aroused; but Ellen remained cold and inanimate, the great black circles beneath her eyes seeming to grow darker, and the tightness round the mouth to increase.

Effie had never seen anyone faint before, but she had some idea of what the remedies might be. The nearest—the only one within her reach—was cold water: this she used plentifully, feeling all the time miserably apprehensive lest she might be doing harm rather than good. For a time there was no sign of returning consciousness, then there was a little quivering about the lips and the eyelids, then a long-drawn breath, and then, to Effie's inexpressible joy, the eyes opened, and Ellen looked up into her face—at first, with a calm glance of enquiry, then, as recollection returned, her eyes dilated with horror, and clutching her sister's arm she cried, "Is he dead—quite dead. Oh Effie! why did I not die?"

"My darling, we trust he is still living: he was not dead when the messenger came, and you know how such things are exaggerated. Aunt Margaret is gone to him, and"—added Effie, thinking that her sister had mistaken the name—"Captain Jefferson is with him too; he had not gone."

Ellen did not appear to notice her words: she raised herself on her arm, and looked with a scared glance out of the window up to the sweet, blue summer sky; then, as if struck by some sudden thought which wounded her beyond endurance, she sprang to her feet, and shrieked aloud, "Effie! Effie! I shall lose my senses—I cannot bear it. Oh! it is too terrible: I who would have died—died for him a hundred times! I could have warned him—could have saved him. I—I—; oh! let me go; I must go to Holybrook; I must see him; I must tell him. But oh!—oh! he is dead: he cannot hear me; he will never know how I loved him,—I, who would have given my life to save him. Oh Effie! Effie! my heart is breaking."

Effie threw her arms round her sister, and gathering her close to her breast, tried to soothe her by every gentle art, but it was of no avail. Effie, whose meek and quiet spirit would have been strong to bear any earthly sorrow, scarcely knew that the human heart was capable of such violent, ungovernable



grief as she that morning witnessed in her young and passionate sister. She comforted, caressed, spoke all words of hope, consolation, and encouragement, but not one of them seemed to reach the poor stricken heart.

Perhaps it saved Ellen's life or reason, that she was still too much of a child for that strong unuttered grief, which will sometimes destroy its victims ere it allows them to give their sufferings way in words or tears. The bitter sobbing and the violent hysterics did, perhaps, prevent the poor brain from altogether giving way. At length, quite worn out with weeping, she allowed Effie to lay her on her bed as if she had been a little child; but she was so exhausted that it seemed to poor Effie at first as if she were sinking away altogether from life; but she could not leave her or call for assistance. It was not long, however, before Ellen slept, and Effie saw with delight that a faint colour returned to her cheeks, and her breathing became gradually more regular.

Effie sat quietly beside her sister until she heard Mr. Grey's door open, then she stole softly out of the room without arousing the sleeper. She had but just time to relate to her grandfather the dreadful occurrences of the night, and to tell him that Margaret had gone to Holybrook—she said nothing of poor Ellen—when Jenny Tuff knocked at the hall door. Effie hastened to meet her. "Oh Jenny," she cried, "how is he? is there any hope?"

"He's alive, Miss, and I b'lieve that's near about as much as I'd be clear for to say. The poor mistress and them all they'se in a tarrible way, an' if they wasn't glad to see Miss Margot it's no matter! He's not sinsible, Miss, nor nothin' near it—never opened his eyes since they found him lyin' at the Abbey gate; an' the blood on the road it's awful to see; an' the Captain's dead horse it's lying there still, for no one has time for to take it away—the great war horse the Captain used to ride so beautiful. Oh, them's awful times; the Lord help us!"—and Jenny, seating herself on a chair in the hall, wiped her hot red face with the checked apron which she wore.

"Do the doctors give any hope, the least hope?" asked Effie.

"If I axed that onct I axed it ten times," replied Jenny, "but not a mother's son among 'em all could tell. They've made a bed for Mr. Julian—the crayture—in the old master's little study inside the hall, for they were afeard to carry him up-stairs, and Dr. Grant, he's standin' over him with his hand on the gun-shot wound in his neck, that they say can't be bandaged nor done nothin' to, exceptin' only to keep down the blood, leastways not till the great surgeon comes from Dublin, that they've sent a tallycrack for; and the army docther, he's workin' at the leg that's broken below the knee. Holy Vargin, it's awful to think of!"

Effie felt so sick and faint that she could not stand. How *was* she to tell all this to poor Ellen?

"Poor boy! poor boy!" said Mr. Grey. "How little we thought of all this last night! I hope to Heaven they'll catch the villain that did it."

"If he's a mortshal man they'll catch him," said Jenny; "there's not a man, woman, or child in all the country side but what 'd give their eyes to see him strung up, the black-hearted varmint, for to touch the likes of Mr. Julian, that w'd never hurt a hair of anybody's head. Every peeler, far an' near's afther him, and the Captain he's fairly demented, for he'd as soon, and rather, have been shot himself nor see Mr. Julian's finger ache; an' if he an' his men catch Pether, they'll not lave a whole bone in his body."

"Oh Jenny! Jenny! don't speak in that way!" said Effie, in a low distressed voice.

"It's tarrible, Miss, but I can't help it."

"They were glad to see Margaret?" said Mr. Grey.

"You may say that, sir, for the poor ould mistress, she had to be runnin' this away and that away, for linen and bandages, an' the likes of that, an' the two docthers could do nothin' only what they had to do: and Mr. Ward I see'd him standin' by the bedside, houlding a basin or a sponge, or somethin' that way, an' I suppose he had been called up sudden, afther he had gone to bed, poor blessed man! for he had on his brave big linen night shirt, an' his tail coat an' hat over it, an' not a stitch besides; an' if Mr. Julian had happened to come to, I'm full sure the sight of him w'd have put him back agin; so if it was for nothin' else only to lave

the sowl time to put on his smalls and gaiters, 'twas well Miss Margot went."

"Mrs. Wilfred was not there then?"

"Oh laws! no, sir; Mrs. Wilfred she took bad when she heard of it, and Mrs. Tatlow's with her and ould Doether Townley, but they say she's in no sort of a dangerous way. Don't for Heaven's sake look so scarred, Miss Effie, or you'll be sick too. But, signs on it! neither you nor the mather's got a bit of breakfast. Lave alone now, an' I'll have it ready for yes in half a minnit."

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#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

EFFIE stole softly up to her sister's room, hoping that Ellen still slept; she had however wakened, and was now, with hasty trembling fingers dressing herself, and smoothing as well as she could her thick disordered locks.

Effie told her most of what Jenny had said of Julian, softening as much as possible the most painful details.

"Oh Effie! might I, might I go to him?" asked Ellen, in a voice so miserably pleading, that it went to her sister's heart.

"My darling," replied Effie, caressingly, "I think you must not now: you may rest assured, that everything that it is in human power to do will be done for him. I am sure that any excitement would be injurious; and, dearest Nell, from all that you have told me, I know it would not do."

Ellen's trembling hands fell helplessly. "Yes, Effie," she said, "I know, what Aunt Margaret said last night was true. I have forfeited even his esteem, and nothing remains to me now but to bear all the consequences of my own miserable folly. Effie! tell no one what I have told you, tell no one how I loved him. It must all be buried, buried down deep, with all this load of misery to cover it."

"My poor, poor darling!" said Effie, tenderly embracing her sister, "rest yourself here; let me try to warm you, you are so cold."

"Effie, I am going down-stairs. I must at least be there,

where I shall hear or see any messenger who comes. But I can control myself. Grandpapa will not observe anything strange: will not know that he is sitting beside a murderer."

"Ellen, Ellen, dearest!"

"I am nothing else. Ask Jenny Tuff. Ask that priest from Ballynock. They told me to warn him, and I was too proud even to speak to him—too proud to speak a few words to save the life of one whom I loved better than all the world besides. Oh Effie! I think I shall lose my senses if you do not allow me to go to Holybrook, and tell them all. Oh! might not I go?"

"No, dearest; no, surely; it would only increase the evil. And do not say or think such things of yourself. I do not believe that our actions can in any case be judged by the consequences which may follow from them. You say you would have died for Julian. I believe you would. You acted from wounded pride, foolishness if you will, but nothing more."

Ellen remained silent for a moment, then she said—

"Effie, if there are such things now, I think I was possessed by some evil and mocking spirit. Oh! you do not know how I spoke to Aunt Margaret last night. I think she can never forgive me."

"But cannot you tell her, and ask her to forgive you?"

"No," said Ellen, sadly, "if you do not allow me to tell Julian, I shall tell no one. Let me go down-stairs now."

"Do, darling Nell, remain here, and allow me to bring you some warm tea."

"No, I must go down. Do not be afraid, for I can control myself."

She did control her feelings, sufficiently at least not to draw the particular attention of any one to herself. Mr. Grey was not sharp-sighted; and Effie took care that Jenny Tuff was as little as possible about the breakfast table. When breakfast was over, and Mr. Grey was settled comfortably in his easy chair, Effie, at her sister's earnest entreaty, walked out to Holybrook.

How that dreary morning—more dreary for the very brilliancy of its summer sunshine—passed by, poor unhappy

Ellen scarcely knew. She listened to her grandfather's speculations as to how it had all happened; his recollections of what the mountain country had been in his youth; of what the Ryan family had been for the last four generations—for he remembered Peter's great-grandfather—was very minute in his details as to the various idiosyncracies of each, how each had in his own way shown that he had "a black drop" in him, all except Christy, who had served faithfully as gardener and man-of-all-work at Holybrook Mill for many years. Ellen sat by, and seemed to attend to all; the old man thought her an attentive listener, and she did hear the words, although they conveyed no meaning to her mind.

At two o'clock Effie returned, looking jaded and weary, and not bringing with her any cheering tidings. Julian was living, and the bleeding from the gun-shot wound was kept in check; as long as it was so, there was a possibility of his recovery, but it might break out again at any moment, and any fresh loss of blood would be sure to prove fatal.

She had only spoken to Samuel Ward—all the other members of the family were engaged in the sick room. At the Mills she had seen her uncle Wilfred. Mrs. Grey was better, but her baby had never lived.

Poor, weary Effie was going up-stairs, her hat in her hand, when Jenny Tuff beckoned her to come into the kitchen.

"Is he bether, Miss?" asked the servant girl, closing the door.

"He is not worse."

"The Lord be praised! And has Mr. Ward put on himself?"

"Yes, Jenny, he is just as usual."

"An' that's well, too. An' did you see Mr. Maunders, Miss?"

"No."

"Because I wanted to know if he'd been axin' about his note? I have it here," said Jenny, reaching up at the same time to the top shelf of the corner cupboard; and taking down the broken tea-pot, she drew from it five little strips of paper. "I won't say for sure what it is, maybe it's a billy-dux, or maybe its somethin' more, but whatsomesever it is its bether in your hands nor in mine—not that I could read one blessed

word of it, if I was to eat my head off; Miss Ellen might bether have took it an' read it—I'm full sure of that; but you see she was that set up and that agitated afther the big ball, that I jistly don't think she knew what she was doin' when she took it an' tore it up into smithereens."

"Do you wish me to give it to her, Jenny?"

"Oh laws! no, Miss! for if she got it again she'd maybe tear 'em in ten pieces in place of five—twice five's ten—ay, into ten pieces; jest take it an' keep it yourself, Miss, for from what Mr. Maunders tould me I'm full sure it contains information. An' if I was you, I'd tell your mamma, Miss Effie, just for to have an eye to Miss Ellen, an' afore all, not to let her go to no more of them big balls till she's cut her wisdom teeth: for she's been talked about more'n good for a young lady, Miss, an' so uncommon handsome a young lady, too. Didn't Anne Dempsey hear down at the baker's, that has one daughter that's maid to the Colonel's young ladies, and the t'other sarvin' her time to Mrs. Johnston, the mantimaker, that Miss Ellen had got a gownd was fit for the Princess herself, an' that all the officers in the regiment subscribed to buy it for her. I tould her to go along for a foolish hussey, that it was her parents sent it—not but that I knew well enough it was the Captain; an' now, Miss Effie, I'm come to the long and the short of what I wanted for to say to you, an' that is that the Captain has no more notion of Miss Ellen nor nothin', an' I wouldn't say it to you, Miss, only I have a raisin, an' you jest get her to put him clean out of her head. He shouldn't have paid her the attintions, an' she shouldn't have took 'em; but that's the way they do: they means nothin', and the girls thinks they mean somethin'."

"Oh Jenny!" said Effie, "I believe you are quite mistaken."

"Maybe so, Miss," said Jenny, in a voice which meant that such a thing as her being mistaken was impossible. "Maybe so, but you mind me, I've said me say: an' the leg of lamb 'll be burnt, an' everything's goin' to jaup for want of bein' looked afther." So saying, Jenny applied herself to her duties, and Effie, very weary, went up-stairs to dress for dinner. Slowly and sorrowfully she

put the five pieces of the note together, and read the contents. It had been written, as Ellen supposed, to warn Julian :—

“DEAR MR. JEFFERSON,—

“Don't either you nor the Captain ride out to Holybrook to-night, as you value your lives. I'll explain when we meet.

“Your obedient servant, R. MAUNDERS.”

Having read it, Effie felt serious doubts as to whether she ought to have done so, though she knew it could matter little now. It had only been given to Ellen's care, and was not addressed to her.

Taking out a fresh envelope, Effie laid the fragments into it, and placed it in her own writing-case.

No one but Ellen herself, she thought, should deliver it to Julian; but what hope was there of her ever being able to do so?

Overcome with the remembrance of the scene of sorrow and suffering which she had so lately quitted, the thought of her poor sister's anguish, and of how easily all might have been prevented, Effie sat down on her bedside, and wept bitterly.

She was exceedingly fatigued in body as well as distressed in mind, and when Jenny came to call her to dinner, she found her too weak and faint to move from her own room. Jenny's first measure was to run for a cup of warm strong tea, which, it being Friday, she had brewed for her own dinner, and give it to Effie, along with a nice little bit of hot toast; her second, to go down to the drawing-room, where Ellen was sitting by herself, and administer to her a sound scolding, for neglecting her sister, and “allowing her to walk herself off her legs, and into a regular downright fever, from which if she should happen to recover she would be sure to go into a galloping decline.”

Ellen, too much alarmed to reply, hastened to her sister's room. Effie had in the meantime been much benefited by Jenny's restoratives; and her returning colour, and sweet smile, reassured her sister. There was nothing amiss with her except what a little rest and nursing would cure, and the attentions which she required, and which Ellen gave unsparingly, were, although unconsciously to Ellen's self, a relief in

turning her mind, in some slight degree, from the all-absorbing thought of her own misery.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

THE wound which Julian Jefferson had received was of the most serious and dangerous character, the ball having passed through his shoulder, injuring one of the larger blood-vessels. A very eminent surgeon had been summoned from Dublin, and the surgeon of the — regiment was also in constant attendance, as well as Dr. Grant, who for days sat at the bedside, scarcely moving, his fingers pressed upon the wound, the position of which was so critical as not at first to admit of bandage or ligature of any kind, but a return of the bleeding from which would have been almost certain and instant death.

After the first few days, Julian was not insensible, but so prostrated by the loss of blood, that he scarcely appeared to notice anything. He did not seem to suffer much, although, besides the gunshot wound, his left leg was broken below the knee, and he had received several other wounds and bruises, whether from the weapon of the assassin or the fall from the horse could not be ascertained.

At the end of ten days, the principal wound had closed sufficiently to admit of hope that with the utmost care he might recover, but it would be long before, if ever again, he could regain his former health.

Colonel Ashton had given permission for Captain Jefferson to remain at Holybrook for a fortnight, but could not obtain a greater extension of leave, as the regiment was to sail in the middle of June.

Nurse-tending was not Captain Jefferson's forte, nor was it at all desirable that he should remain in the sick chamber, for soldier as he was, and accustomed as he had been to see death and suffering in their most appalling forms, he seemed unable to bear their presence when they came thus closely to one whom he loved so well. The sight of his brother's grief was the only thing which appeared to disturb Julian, so that



the doctors thought it best that his visits should be as few as possible. But the extension of his leave was the greatest comfort to Mrs. Jefferson, who would have found it very hard to part from him just at this time.

He was most eager also in assisting in the pursuit of Ryan, who was without doubt the perpetrator of this deed. The police scoured the country night and day; sought for the wretched man among the mountains, in the town, through the shipping, along the sea-coast; but no clue to his whereabouts was ever discovered. Nance and her luggage, her "plunder,"—for the American term is most fitting here—sailed in the Liverpool boat, were traced to a low lodging-house in Liverpool, but no farther. On the night of the attempted murder, the police, who went first to Ryan's house—the house on Iveagh Hill in which Christy had died—found that its only living occupant was poor Peg, who sat crouched in a corner, moaning over the body of her dead infant. Furniture, blankets, bedding, or anything which was of the slightest value, had been removed, but not to the house at Ballynock, whither the family had never gone—the carts which they had borrowed having only been used to carry their stolen goods away.

On examining the house, there was discovered under the bed, so long occupied, first by Christy Ryan, and then by Peg, a large hole or excavation, where it was evident Nance and her son had stowed away their stolen goods. One or two articles of very small value, which had been taken from Mr. Tatlow's house, were still there; the rest they must have taken with them in their flight. The covering, which had been ingeniously composed of boards, plastered over with earth, to resemble the earthen floor of the cabin, was thrown on one side, and all appeared as if the occupants had been rather hurried at the last. Poor Peg, it was necessary under the circumstances, to take into custody, although scarcely any suspicion rested upon her; but she probably found in the hospital of the County Jail the most comfortable and peaceable asylum she had known for many years. When dismissed from thence she found a home in Dr. Grant's establishment, where, under the superintendence of a very kind mistress, she promised to make a good servant, and where she is likely to remain for the rest of her life.

Samuel Ward had at last to return to Dublin ; the rebellion could not be quelled without his aid, but "way had opened," as he said himself, and he was resolved upon dismissing his troublesome housekeeper as soon as might be.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

For the first three weeks of his illness Julian appeared to sleep almost constantly, or perhaps, rather, to lie in a partial trance, occasioned by exceeding weakness ; but he was not insensible, for when roused out of this state he knew every one, and showed pleasure in seeing those whom he loved around him. But he scarcely ever spoke. There was much fever attending his illness, caused by the severe wounds, but it was of so low and prostrating a nature, that the greatest fear of his physicians now was, that he would sink from utter exhaustion.

At length there came a kind of crisis in the fever, and he fell into a deep, quiet, and natural slumber, which however continued so long, as to make his nurses at last sorely dread, that he might never awake from it, and even to cause much uneasiness to Dr. Grant, who anxiously watched for his waking. He, with Mrs. Jefferson, waited in the silent room, which, but for the regular and quiet breathing of the sick man, would have appeared like the chamber of death. As the short summer night wore away, and the morning broke, poor Mrs. Jefferson felt as if she could scarcely endure the suspense any longer : Julian had slept since early in the preceding day, without once opening his eyes, or tasting any of the delicate little morsels which she delighted in preparing for him.

"Oh John, dear," she said at length, laying her hand upon the doctor's arm, "don't you think we might wake him ? He's sleeping away into eternity, I'm sure he is."

Dr. Grant shook his head. "No," he said, "this sleep is his only chance ; he may waken better, much better. I do not feel so anxious now ; see how much the colour has returned to his lips."

"Yes, thank God," said Mrs. Jefferson, softly ; and as she

leaned a little over the bed Julian opened his eyes, and looking up into her face said, smiling—

"That has been a brave sleep, mother, has it not? How long has it been?"

"Ten, twelve, sixteen hours; I am sure it has been sixteen hours. And you feel better for it, my precious boy, don't you?"

"Better, yes, I feel quite well. Just at present I seem to have neither pain nor ache in either mind or body."

"My own boy!" said Mrs. Jefferson, while tears of gratitude filled her eyes; "and now what do you say to a little breakfast?"

"Breakfast!" repeated Julian, with a smile. "It seems a strange idea to me just now, but I shall do as you like."

"He had better have this first," said John Grant, bringing forward the cordial medicine which he had prepared for the patient's waking. "Perhaps afterward he may be able to take something more like food."

The old lady hastened away to procure some light nourishment, which she would allow no other hands the happiness of preparing, and was rejoiced on her return to find Julian able to take it, although not with as much relish as she could have wished: but it *was* eaten, and that was the great point.

"Now, mother," said the young man, when he was again quietly settled, "I have had my sleep, and you must have yours. This night watching is very unfit for you."

"No, no, my boy, I am well, quite well, now that I see you so much better."

"Mrs. Jefferson must go to bed now," said Dr. Grant. "Do, dear Madam, there will be nothing more needed, and I shall remain with Julian."

"Not you, Doctor," exclaimed the patient, "you look as sleepy as a dormouse this minute. Go to your bed like a good man, I shall do beautifully by myself. Or," he continued, as at that moment Margaret Grey entered the room, "here is Margaret, looking as fresh as the morning itself, she will stay with me, if you will not trust me alone."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Jefferson, "Margaret is a host in herself; I think we may trust her, Doctor?"

"Miss Grey is as good a doctor as I am, or better, much better in some ways," said Dr. Grant, with a sigh; "but if I

am to go away, it will not be to sleep, I have other patients to visit, and this is a glorious morning for a drive through the mountains; I shall be back here at eight or nine o'clock."

Margaret seated herself at the bedside, and Julian, who had begged to have the window left open, lay silently gazing out upon the gardens, where on grass and tree the pearly dewdrops were glistening. It was a bright sweet morning in early June; the air was full of the fresh perfume of flower and herb, and newly-opened foliage, and the small birds warbled and twittered, far and near.

"It looks to me like fairyland—like Paradise rather;" said Julian, at last. "Are not those convolvuluses which hang around the window like morsels of a rainbow resting among emeralds? It is almost worth a long illness to see these things in such glowing hues—their real hues, I believe. Are they not, Margaret?"

"I recollect the same sensation when I was quite a child," said Margaret, "when, after a long and suffering illness, I began to recover, and was first taken into the open air. My father drew me in my little chair out into the garden at Holybrook Mills; the autumn flowers were in full bloom, and I was so delighted by their loveliness that I half fancied I had strayed by accident into the Garden of Eden itself."

Julian smiled. "Yes," he said, "those clustering roses on which the dew-drops are still sparkling are beautiful as the 'first roses which bloomed o'er the four rivers.' Ah!"—and a sudden spasm of pain crossed his face, and closing his eyes, he remained silent for some time.

"Margaret!" he said at length, "those lines of Tennyson's were the last I ever read to Ellen. I was reading them to her on that happy evening—why do they recur to my mind now? I thought, I hoped all that was past, and it is, I believe. But ah! if that sweet tranquil sleep could have continued longer—lasted for the remainder of my life! It seemed as if all my sufferings both of mind and body were at an end; peace had entered into my whole being, and I enjoyed

'All the quiet God has given,  
Without the golden gates of heaven.'

Now earth has come again and earthly suffering."

"You do not feel worse, dear Julian?"

"No, Margaret, Heaven forgive me! I fear that I feel better; how long it may continue I cannot tell, but perhaps I may return again to this strange April day thing which we call life. I am too weary for it yet, too tired, and too weak. Perhaps if I sleep I shall go back to the 'delectable country' from which I seemed to waken, or lying still, at least enjoy the loveliness on which my eyes first opened—the soft sunshine, the dew-spangled flowers, the fragrant air, and the singing of birds. It is a beautiful world after all, a very beautiful world."

Julian closed his eyes, and in perfect silence Margaret watched beside his bed. She soon saw that he slept again, and knew by the expression of the countenance, and by the soft and regular breathing, that the sleep was a refreshing one. "He will live, I know he will," she said to herself; and then she bent her head upon her hands, and quiet, thankful tears filled her eyes and flowed down her cheeks.

At eight o'clock the patient wakened, much refreshed, and Dr. Grant, who had returned, hastened to his room.

"Well, Doctor, said Julian, as he entered, "here I am, after all, and much better, as far as I can judge. I thought I should have slept away out of the world altogether, but you see I have not done so yet."

Dr. Grant took the wasted hand and felt the feeble pulse, whilst Mrs. Jefferson watched anxiously to read the expression of his countenance.

"Much better," said the doctor, cheerily, "really much better, though weak enough still; that, however, I trust we shall soon remedy. You must eat every good thing you can lay hold of, and spend the intermediate time in sleeping."

"Very good, Doctor," said Julian, smiling.

"And," continued Dr. Grant, "I have brought some good news for you, and for us all. Colonel Ashton has obtained leave for the Captain to remain at the Dépôt for six months longer."

"Oh Doctor!" exclaimed Mrs. Jefferson, "do you really say so! By that time, please Heaven, Julian will be all right."

For a moment the young man remained silent, then, turning to Margaret, he said, in a low voice, "I thank God that I can say from my heart that I am glad, truly glad."

"And what do you think?" continued Mrs. Jefferson, with beaming countenance, "Samuel has come back too, stolen a march on us all, and travelled down by the night mail. He has taken a bath, and is as fresh as a daisy. Samuel always was such a stout healthy man. As soon as he has eaten his breakfast I'm sure he'll go off quite 'cock-a-hoop' to tell Cousin Kitty all his exploits."

"Oh," said Dr. Grant, "if so, I hope Mr. Ward will allow me to send a message by him, as I have rather a serious case about a mile further in the country."

"Surely, surely."

"And of course he will let my aunts and the family at Rose Cottage know of Julian's welfare."

"Yes, I shall tell him to go there at once."

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

How poor Ellen Walker passed those miserable days when Julian's life trembled in the balance—when she could only wait, and hope, and try to pray, whilst her heart was bowed with bitter remorse and sorrow for the past—only those who have gone through a like misery can tell. Her life had been so bright and happy until within the last few weeks: now all was gloom and hopelessness; but the bitterest pang of all was that to her own folly and hasty uncontrolled temper Julian's life might be forfeited. Poor girl! the burden was greater than she could bear: it seemed to her at times that her reason was deserting her. Effie's kind and loving sympathy was her only consolation; but still she felt that the long weary hours would never wear away. She tried to work, but her listless fingers refused their accustomed task. She tried to read, but every book was full of painful memories:—

"Merry books, once read for pastime,  
If we dare to read again;  
Only memories of the last time  
Will swim darkly up the brain."

There were many morning visitors at Rose Cottage, now more than ever, for they knew that Mr. Grey's family were intimate

with the Jeffersons, and there was much interest felt and expressed in Julian's progress, although many of the callers were persons who felt no further interest than is caused by love of excitement and of gossip. It was torture to Ellen to hear the flippant remarks of comparative strangers as to the probable termination of Julian Jefferson's illness, and yet she forced herself to listen and to answer as if his life or death were not more than all the world to her.

Although Mrs. Stevens and Kitty Grant could not be reckoned amongst uninterested persons, their visits were not the less trying : the former spoke at such length of the many faults of which she considered the twin brothers to have been guilty ; and the latter was so very plaintive and hopeless as to the possibility of Julian's ultimate recovery, that a violent fit of hysterics, or a sleepless night was sure to follow for poor Ellen.

Effie resolved, at all costs, to shield her sister from the recurrence of these visits ; and yet it was Aunt Kitty who was, although in a somewhat hazy manner, the bearer of the intelligence which first brought hope and consolation to Ellen's heart.

Samuel Ward had, at last, figuratively speaking, buckled on his armour and gone to Dublin, and, strengthened by the thought of Kitty, had calmly met his old housekeeper, and, to her utter amazement, dismissed her from his service. Then having hired new servants, and made all straight, the good man returned to Holybrook, rejoicing. Finding Julian, to whom he was much attached, really better, he felt much exhilarated, and as soon as possible walked in to Glarisford to inform his affianced bride of the pleasant turn affairs had taken. When he and Kitty had spent some time together, not interrupted by Mrs. Stevens, who was confined to bed with a slight cold, they proceeded to Rose Cottage to communicate the joyful intelligence of Julian's welfare to its inmates, not knowing, indeed, how joyful that intelligence was to them, nor how to one it was as life from the dead.

Effie and Ellen, with their grandfather, were sitting in the little drawing-room ; Effie sewing, Ellen reading aloud a long uninteresting article out of the *Glarisford Post*, but whether it had been interesting or the contrary made no difference to the

reader. She repeated the words correctly and distinctly enough, and yet her whole mind was intent on listening for the little click of the iron gate, which might announce the arrival of a messenger from Holybrook. She had just read a paragraph which stated that "the penurious conduct of some members of the Town Council of Glarisford in not having the leading thoroughfares mended, previous to the late visit of His Excellency, Lord Carlisle, had been beneath contempt," when the little iron gate swung to, and Samuel Ward and Kitty Grant were seen entering the garden.

"Go, dear, you had much better," whispered Effie to her sister; but although Ellen grew very pale, she did not move from her seat: it was torture to her to hear all the particulars of Julian's illness, but listen she must, and Samuel Ward would surely bring the latest intelligence. But oh the misery which she every day suffered at the approach of the messenger from Holybrook,—the messenger who might bring such fearful tidings! and the few moments which elapsed between the shutting of the little gate and the knock at the hall door seemed to her all but unendurable.

Samuel and Kitty stopped after they had walked a few paces up the garden; Kitty bent her head, and Samuel, drawing forth a large lawn handkerchief, took off his spectacles, and wiped them carefully before replacing them on his nose.

They were only looking at the stocks, which still bloomed around the summer-house; but poor Ellen thought they paused because the intelligence which they brought was too dreadful to them to impart. For some moments they appeared engaged in earnest consultation; then Kitty walked a few steps toward the house, then Samuel said something which recalled her to his side, and again they conversed together for some moments. Ellen, trembling all over, caught her sister's hand for support.

"What ails the old bodies?" said Mr. Grey, hobbling to the window. "Why don't they come and tell us about the poor lad? There they go again! Upon my word, one might almost fancy they were a pair of young lovers. Mr. Ward must have a bee in his bonnet, as the Scotch say: that big beaver of his is large enough to hold a whole swarm."

"Must not Julian be better?" said Effie, addressing her



grandfather, while at the same time she pressed the poor cold hand which held her own ; "I think if it were not so they would come at once."

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Mr. Grey ; "but for my part I think there must be something very serious the matter. Don't you see Mr. Ward wiping his eyes and blowing his nose ? I'm not naturally nervous, or over-anxious, but the last account of Julian was not favourable." Then Mr. Grey, quite out of patience, threw up the window—"Come, come, my good friends," he called aloud ; "if I were only able I'd run down to meet you. Is there any change in Julian ?"

Kitty, whose natural nervousness was not at all decreased by her happy prospects, started, and hastened up to the window, looking pale with agitation.

"Oh !" she exclaimed ; "Samuel—that is, Cousin Samuel came on purpose : that is, almost altogether, to say, that John had such a very serious case, quite alarming, so he sent word by him—I mean Cousin Samuel—that Julian had had a crisis, so much so that there was reason to fear he would never waken again, and that we must endeavour to hope ; and he really believes it was quite for the best."

"What's for the best ? I don't understand what you're talking about, Miss Grant. I'll call that good man of yours, maybe he'll be able to tell us more."

"Oh !—a—George Grey," said Kitty, gaspingly ; "it's only Cousin Samuel."

"To be sure, to be sure ! you don't suppose I mistake him for anyone else ; but if you don't wish him called, come in yourself at least."

Kitty obeyed, and entering the hall door was soon in the drawing-room.

"Now take a seat, and tell us all about him," said Mr. Grey, "for upon my word we're very uneasy."

Now although Kitty Grant took the liveliest interest in Julian's welfare, the thought of the young man was not quite uppermost in her mind just then ; and supposing that by "him" Mr. Grey meant Samuel Ward—and that it was on account of their matrimonial prospects he felt uneasy—she became more and more agitated. She had kept her engagement a profound secret from everyone, except her own sister and

Mrs. Jefferson, and she could not tell, nor did she, in her present confusion, wait to consider how Mr. Grey had become acquainted with the fact.

"Oh!—a—" she gasped once more, whilst at the same time she nervously unfastened the white ribbons with which her grey silk bonnet was tied. "I hope you won't think it wrong in me: but I had not meant to tell you, at least, not till Margaret was here, because I was afraid that you, like Sister Stevens, might think it an unguarded step; but still, I expect, we have reason to hope, that it may be for the best, although she does not quite see with us; but Cousin Samuel says"—without such high authority Kitty would not have ventured to make this presumptuous assertion—"Cousin Samuel says that Sarah might be mistaken, and that we may be encouraged to hope that it is a right step under the circumstances."

"Oh! Effie, Effie!" whispered Ellen, at the same time grasping her sister's arm—she believed that Kitty Grant was trying to prepare them for some new and dreadful symptom which had appeared in Julian's case.

Effie herself, much alarmed, was about to ask the old lady to speak more distinctly, but her grandfather was before her. "My dear Kitty," he exclaimed, "what are you saying? you must excuse me, but I can't make either head or tail of it! Is Julian's leg going to be cut off? or his head? or what?"

Kitty, exceedingly frightened by this sudden and unexpected question, burst into tears, just as Samuel Ward entered, holding in his hand a bunch of stocks, wallflowers, and pinks, which filled the room with their delicious perfume.

By this time poor Ellen was almost paralysed with terror; and even Effie thought that Julian must be much worse, if living at all.

"Dear, dear!" said Samuel Ward, "and while he laid down his nosegay, and took off his gloves, he looked enquiringly from Kitty to Mr. Grey, and from Mr. Grey to Effie. 'I hope,' he said, 'you have not received any uncomfortable account from absent friends?'"

"Not unless you or Kitty brought it," said Mr. Grey. "Is Julian Jefferson dead or dying?"

"Oh dear no! Did not Cousin Kitty inform you that

Julian is quite better. John Grant, indeed, says that he has few fears for him now, and the leading surgeon coincides." Then taking a seat beside Kitty, he said, "What is disturbing thy mind, my dear?"

"N—nothing," replied Kitty, in a tremulous voice; "but thou knows, thou always knew, that I am foolishly nervous. I thought George Grey asked me about—about us, and I believe he didn't—and doesn't understand."

"I don't say I do either," said Samuel Ward. "But perhaps you are not aware that this dear 'Friend' is likely to become my wife? I fancy she was about to tell of our prospect, but I can't quite say."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Mr. Grey; "I'm sure I wish you all the happiness in the world: but who would have thought it! Was that what you were telling us, Kitty?—I beg a thousand pardons."

"Oh, Aunt Kitty, dear!" cried Effie, kneeling down beside the still weeping old lady, "do excuse us; indeed, we were very stupid, and it was very hard to you for us not to understand you at once. I am very glad, very glad indeed, for I am sure you will be so much happier."

"So, I expect, shall I," said Samuel Ward; "and dost thou know, Euphemia," he continued, with a slight elevation of his brows, and rounding of his eyes, "I have dismissed Betty!"

Effie clapped her hands, and in her excitement was very near saying something about her two old friends being delivered from their tormentors—namely, Sarah Stevens and Betty; but stopping short, she only repeated, "I am glad, very glad indeed."

"Come then, Effie," said Mr. Grey, "get some lunch ready for our friends, and bring out a bottle of the old Madeira, that we may drink to their health and happiness—Julian recovering, and a wedding approaching! I really think the tide has turned, and we have done with misfortunes for awhile. And here comes the post," he continued, as the red-coated messenger appeared at the gate; "and he brings good news I'm confident—good and evil always come in threes."

Effie took the letter which the postman brought to the open window. "It is from mamma," she said, when she had perused

its contents ; " she is quite settled at Arranmore now, and she wishes us to join her there as soon as possible, if you could only come with us, grandpapa. Mamma is so anxious to have you, and Jenny will be able to take care of the house."

" I'll go, to be sure, with a heart and a half," said the old man. " Didn't I tell you that there was more good news coming ? There's nothing I'd like better than a month at the sea with Marion."

Ellen had been every day dreading this summons from her mother, knowing that at Arranmore communication with Holybrook Abbey must be much less frequent ; and while Julian Jefferson's life hung in the balance, she had felt that she could not endure the idea of trusting only to occasional intelligence. Now, however, that he was really better, the case was different, and she too felt that the change to Arranmore would be an additional relief.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IT too often happens, that when one all-absorbing source of anxiety is removed, another takes its place ; and even if the natural proportions of the new trouble are very much smaller, it has a faculty of swelling itself out, and puffing itself up, so as to fill all the space before occupied, and in right of being present, appearing almost, if not quite, as great as that which has passed away. All do not, many may not, experience this ; but those who know nothing of it, and who give to each trial as it comes its due and proper place, must possess minds both healthy and well regulated.

Ellen Walker's first feelings, when she realised the truth that Julian Jefferson's life was no longer in peril, were feelings of unalloyed unspeakable joy and thankfulness ; and yet, many hours had not passed ere she remembered how far happiness or peace might be from returning to her own heart.

It is possible that for that day no selfish thought might have intruded on or marred her happiness, if it had not been that in arranging some things which she was to take to Arranmore she happened to open the drawer into which she had, on the morning of the ball, thrown the flowers which Julian had given her.

The drawer had been closed since then, and now as she opened it, the sweet perfume, so long shut up, rose, and was wafted all around, seeming to envelope her in a cloud of vivid but most painful remembrances. The soft peculiar fragrance of the hot-house rose, which she and Julian had together tended, and the aromatic odour of the stefanotas, familiar too, for had she not gladly received and carefully kept the flowers which first opened, and which Julian had given her. For a moment she seemed to live over again the happy hours which they had spent together in the sunny spring-time; then all that had since occurred followed with equal distinctness; and lastly, with the bitterest pang of all, came Julian's words to her in the conservatory of Glarisford Castle—"I believe you know that I love you, but you cannot know how much;" and her own cruel mocking reply—"I think I do know, and I assure you such regard is valueless to me." Oh! those false, false words which she could never recall, and which he would never forget. She knew her own heart now—there was no pride, no excitement there to gloss over or disguise her real feelings.

"Oh! oh!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands in an agony of sorrow; "I cannot, cannot bear it! If he only knew that all that I said was false—if he only knew what I have suffered, I think I could; but I shall never see him again, and he will never, never know."

Shuddering, she closed the drawer—it was too hard to look upon the poor withered flowers, and to smell the fragrance which still arose from them: the flowers seemed but a picture of what her life was now, their perfume, the memories which would cling to her as long as that life should last—memories which might have been so sweet, but which now were only pain and bitterness.

The first stanzas of a melancholy little song which Effie and she had sung together many a time when they were at home seemed wailing through her mind. It was a song which their father liked to hear them sing, and they had often laughed merrily at the idea of his fancying one which was so sentimental; but there was in its peculiarity something attractive. The words were not much in themselves, but the music which accompanied them was very peculiar—the first part full of wailing and despair, the second part all hope and triumph.

Ellen felt now as if she must sing them again. There was no one in the drawing-room she knew ; she did not wish anyone to hear her, but sing them she must—they were like the dirge of all the happiness which had passed from her life for ever. Going down-stairs she shut herself into the drawing-room, opened the piano, and, to a weird and wailing accompaniment, sang the following words :—

“ They are gone, like the roses of last year’s June,  
They are gone, like the smiles in last April’s sky ;  
The roses were sweet, but they withered full soon  
The sunshine was bright, but it soon passed by.

“ Think not again of those vanished days,  
Think not of all that made them so bright ;  
For gone for aye are the glowing rays  
Which shed round my path their delusive light.

“ All the fond hopes to my heart, once so dear,  
All the fair dreams which my fancy e’er knew,  
Lie dead like the roses, as withered as sere,  
Faded and gone is each radiant hue.

“ Bury them lowly, and think not again,  
Even of the grave, where their cold relics lie ;  
Every remembrance is vainer than vain :  
Even from their ashes my memory must fly.”

With the last melancholy wail of the music, Ellen’s voice and fortitude forsook her, and throwing herself on the sofa she burst into tears.

“ My sweet Nell ! my own darling ! ” said Effie, who, half-alarmed at the sound of music so long silent in the cottage, had hastened to the drawing-room. “ My darling, why are you unhappy to-day, when our hearts are all so full of thankfulness ? ”

“ Oh, I don’t know : I am very miserable, and I could not help singing that wild old song. We used to laugh when we sang it, Effie, simply because it was so miserable, and now I feel it all true, too true.”

“ But if you must sing the first part, why not sing the second also ? Come, I shall sing it for you, Nell,”—and seating herself at the piano, Effie sang the concluding stanzas, while the accompaniment, changing with the sentiments, seemed to

breathe now of hope and promise as the first had told only of despair :—

“ Listen, sad soul, let thy sorrowing cease,  
Nor by earth's clouds be thy spirit o'ercast ;  
Look ! for on high shines the bright bow of peace,  
In the future's glad promise forget the stern past.

“ Dark clouds are above thee, around thee e'en now ;  
But the rainbow of Hope on those clouds shineth bright,  
Though the sun of thy life may be sinking and low,  
Its rays can still change every raindrop to light.

“ And again it shall rise, and a bright sunny morn  
Shall succeed to the long night of sighing and tears :  
New beauties shall bloom, and new sunshine adorn  
The fresh pathways which lead thee to happier years.”

“ The despair is all for me,” said Ellen, sadly, as her sister ended, “ but none of the hope. I *am* thankful—oh ! unspeakably thankful that Julian is out of danger, and I am glad, too, that we are going to Arranmore. I am satisfied to go anywhere—to the ends of the earth, the farther the better ; I do not care where I go, for I shall never see him again.”

“ If he recover, dear Nell, as I do trust he will, you will, probably, often see him again.”

“ No ! ” said Ellen, shaking her head sadly ; “ ah no, Effie ! If I could only know that he could ever forgive me I should ask no more. I can never see him again after all that has passed,—after all that I have done and left undone,”—and seating herself on the floor at Effie's feet, she rested her head disconsolately on her sister's lap.

“ Why be so hopeless, Nell ? ” said Effie ; “ you have had one great happiness to-day in hearing that Julian may recover ; try to think of that, without dreading the future or mourning over the past.”

“ Ah yes, Effie ; you think I may be calm and quiet like yourself, but you do not understand my feelings—you cannot, for you never loved anyone—anyone, I mean, except papa and mamma and me, and all the people you ought to love.”

If Ellen had been thinking of anything except herself and her own troubles, she would have seen the look of pain which crossed her sister's face ; all that she did observe, however,

and perhaps she did not notice that either any more than we notice the fresh air and sunshine which are around us every day, was the gentle hand which stroked her hair, and the loving voice which said,—

“My darling, I do not mean to make little of your suffering; I only wish you to have more hope. Time may bring so many changes, and, with God’s blessing, so many consolations; all may end so differently from what you now fear. Julian did really love you; do you think he can forget you so soon?”

“Forget! no, people have not the power of forgetting so quickly, I wish they had. He will remember me well enough, but only to despise me. Aunt Margaret knows him better than anyone else, and she told me I had forfeited even his esteem.”

“I scarcely think so, Nell. He will not, I am sure, have judged you harshly; he believed that you preferred his brother, and he is too generous to have blamed you for doing so.”

“But oh, Effie! he will never know the truth, for I did all in my power to make him think that I liked Captain Jefferson—I was so silly.”

“And what of Captain Jefferson’s feelings, Nell? Have you no compunction about him?”

The first faint glimmer of a smile which had been there for many a day played round Ellen’s lips.

“Oh no, Effie,” she said. “Julius did not think so, he could not.”

“Why, dear? you may have deceived him as well as others.”

“But I never thought of caring for him more than as—as Julius, my old playfellow. I knew he was a person with whom I might be as pleasant as I pleased—I do not mean that as an excuse—but might not I, Effie?”

“He is not your playfellow now, dear.”

“I know,” said Ellen, sadly, “and I did know always, for oh, it was very wicked of me; but my greatest wish was to make Julian believe that I disliked him, and—and—liked his brother.” Then, as a sudden recollection struck her, she continued quickly: “I never spoke to you, Effie,—and, indeed, I had forgotten all about it until this moment,—of what Captain Jefferson told me on the night of the ball at Glarisford Castle. I do not know why he told me, for I certainly did not ask him



anything about his own affairs ; but when we were resting in the conservatory, after one of the dances, he said, that the reason why he felt so much in leaving Ireland now was, that he was very much attached to some young lady ; I am not sure that he said he was engaged—no, I think he said not—I think he said that he feared his affection was not returned. Was it not strange for him to tell me all that ?”

“ Are you sure that he was not speaking of yourself, Nell ?”

“ Perfectly sure. I fancy it must have been Lady Cornelia, because he seemed so hopeless ; but was it not strange for him to tell me ?”

Effie did not at once reply, and Ellen repeated the question.

“ Do you not wonder that he told me ?”

“ I am not sure that I do,” replied Effie, in a hesitating tone.

“ Why ?”

“ Never mind now, dear.”

“ Was it not because we were such old friends ?”

“ I do not think that was altogether the reason.”

“ What was it then ?”

“ I fear,” replied Effie, with hesitation, and blushing as much as if she had been herself in fault ; “ I fear Julius misunderstood you as well as others.”

“ How ?” asked Ellen, looking up anxiously, whilst the colour rose to her cheeks. “ Do tell me.”

“ I don't like to say this to you, Nelly, dear ; but if Captain Jefferson was not speaking of yourself—if he did not mean that it was to you he was so much attached—I fear he thought as Julian thought, as Aunt Margaret and I believed.”

“ What, Effie ! that I—that I—— Do you think he fancied I liked him, and that—— Oh Effie ! Effie ! what shall I do ? What a fool I have made of myself, and I never even thought of this before, although now things come flashing back to my mind ; what must Captain Jefferson have thought ! Oh ! I can never see anyone again. I wish there was some place where I could hide myself, away from every one—— What is that ?” she continued, starting, as she heard the click of the gate. “ It is Captain Jefferson himself,” she cried, as she sprang to her feet. “ Oh Effie ! you must tell him that I never, really

never thought of such a thing, won't you, Effie, darling? I can't stay—I can't see him; but you must tell him how it was—you know, you can say anything."

Then Ellen hastily left the room; but Effie, kind as she was, did not promise to comply with her sister's parting request.

She took up the piece of embroidery which she had laid aside while speaking to Ellen, but her hands trembled, and the few stitches which she completed in the interval between Captain Jefferson's knock at the hall door and his admission to the drawing-room, were very unlike her usual neat style of embroidery. When the young man entered, however, there was in her deportment little evidence of mental perturbation—none, perhaps, except that the usually very pale tinge of vermillion in her cheeks was deepened two or three shades.

"You have already heard the good news which has gladdened all our hearts to-day?" said Captain Jefferson, as he took a chair near the window beside which Effie was seated.

"Yes," she replied; "it has made us very happy."

"It has lifted a fearful weight from my mind. I could scarcely endure the idea of leaving Julian, when I felt that the first letter which should reach me after my departure might be to tell me of his death. Now, the doctors all agree that danger is past, and that he may recover rapidly. By this morning's post also, I have received orders to remain here at the *Depôt* for six months longer, so that before I sail I trust his health will be perfectly restored."

"How very pleasant!" said Effie.

"Yes, I ought to think it very pleasant too, and I need not tell you how thankful I am for Julian's recovery; but I am a discontented fellow—I always was, you know."

"Were you?" said Effie, smiling; "I did not know."

"You will believe me, perhaps, when I tell you that these two happy circumstances do not satisfy me—indeed, are very far from completing my happiness. In fact, although I could have gone away with a good grace, I cannot stay at home unless—— Effie, dear Miss Walker," continued the young man, bending forward, "why are you so cold to me? you who are all kindness and goodness to others."

"I do not mean to be cold or unkind," said Effie, trembling greatly: "you have mistaken me."

"I wish I had—I wish to Heaven I had mistaken you. No, it is you who have mistaken me. You think me frivolous and changeable, but if you could see into my heart you would think so no longer : I have never changed from loving you, and I never can. Oh Effie ! if you are not otherwise engaged, will you not try to return a little, a very little of the affection which I feel for you ?"

Poor Effie, generally so calm and quiet in all her ways, now replied to this appeal by a violent fit of weeping—her feelings, so long curbed and kept within bounds, would bear the restraint no longer. Julius, much alarmed, earnestly begged her forgiveness. He took the little trembling hand in his own, and she did not withdraw it ; and when the first violence of her emotion was passed, she looked up, and smiling through her tears, said,—

"Julius, I may have deceived you, but I never deceived myself. I have only been cold to you because I loved you so much."

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### CHAPTER XXXIX.

ELLEN had hastened up to her room, her cheeks burning with blushes, and her eyes glistening with tears. What was this new trouble that had come upon her, or, rather, that she had herself heedlessly rushed into ? Almost mechanically she went to the dressing-table and began to smooth her hair. In the mirror she saw a reflection which was certainly very beautiful, and from which her present agitation did not in any way detract.

Could what Effie had said be the case ?—had Captain Jefferson really believed that she loved him ? and did he love her ?

She had had very little experience of the world or of the world's young gentlemen ; but since she had come to Glarisford, she had discovered that she was more beautiful than most other girls, and that she was, consequently, much admired. She had read that in a great many eyes—very handsome and very distinguished eyes, too, at the ball at Glarisford Castle. But Captain Jefferson ! what had his eyes or his tongue either said

to her? She tried to recall his words, and recalling them, she could not be *quite* sure that she had clearly understood them.

Had he really been speaking of some other person, or of herself, as Effie had suggested? Her heart beat quicker and quicker as the conviction grew stronger in her mind, that the young officer had been speaking of herself—had, in fact, although in rather a covert manner, actually proposed for her. To do her justice, Captain Jefferson's words had been very ambiguous. He wished to make her aware of his affection for her sister, and hoped that he had done so; but every one must allow that it is not a very easy task for a young man to tell a beautiful girl, who he thinks may have a very considerable *penchant* for himself, that it will be quite impossible for him, under existing circumstances, to return her regard.

Poor Ellen! she thought over and over again of all that he had said to her at Glarisford Castle; then she remembered his late visit on the evening following the ball; various things which he had then said; and last, and worst of all, she remembered the song which she had then sung. Had not Margaret concluded from that song that she *was* engaged to him, and might not he himself have thought the same? And oh—that dress! perhaps her acceptance of that dress was an acceptance of his suit. What would he say now? How could she disabuse his mind? And there he was, down in the drawing-room, talking to Effie. Would Effie tell him all?—she feared not. They were, probably, talking on common-place subjects; and Jenny would surely be sent to call her in a few moments, as soon as the Captain should explain to Effie that he wished to see her. Then she must go down, and then what could she say? It would be very difficult.

She turned, and opening the press where the ball dress still hung, gazed on its somewhat crumpled magnificence. "I shall ask him to take it back. Could I not at least do that?" she said to herself; "and would he not understand all that I meant? I hope he would; but I don't know that I could give it to him myself—perhaps if I make it up into a parcel, and write a little note. Yes, I think that will be best, and Effie will take both to him!"

So thinking, she looked about her for writing materials. Her writing-case was down-stairs; but Effie, she knew, always kept pen, ink, and paper in a neat little desk in her own room, and thither she repaired. For a moment she listened at the head of the stairs; the drawing-room door was shut, and all was silent below: Effie and Julius had not yet got through all their common-places.

Effie's desk was, as she supposed, in her room. She opened it; but here, alas! another trouble awaited her—from the first envelope which she took up fell the five pieces of Mr. Maunders's note to Julian. She looked over them, and as she did so, all the colour fled from her cheeks: "Oh, if I were only dead, she exclaimed—if I had died long ago before all this had come upon me—before I had done all this harm. I have done nothing but injury to anyone."

At this moment Effie entered the room. She would at once have told Ellen of all that had passed between herself and Captain Jefferson, but how could she communicate her own happiness to the doleful face which was turned toward her on her entrance?

"Effie," said the younger sister, with a quivering voice, "I came to your desk for some paper, and the first envelope which I took out contained these fragments. How strange that they should turn up so! but it is always the way when a great crime is committed—the proofs of it always turn up."

"My darling Nell, do not talk in that wild way: you know I told you that you must not. There is nothing strange in these papers being here. I meant to have told you of them as soon as Julian was better, as he is now. Jenny picked them up from the ground where you threw them, and thinking they might be of consequence, and not being able to read writing easily herself, she gave them to me, that is all. They contain but a few lines: they were, as you supposed, written to prevent either Julian or his brother from going out to Holybrook that night."

Ellen laid her head on the table and moaned piteously.

"My poor Nell! you cannot, must not dwell on that. You did not know what you were doing, and it is, or will be, all right yet, I trust."

"Never!" said Ellen; "but these, at least, must be given to the person to whom they are addressed. It is my duty, and my fitting punishment to tell Julian of them—not to speak to him, for I never intend to see him again; but I shall write a full explanation—write, at least, that I tore up the letter, and that it was all my fault from beginning to end, and enclose these fragments."

"Indeed, Nell, you must do nothing of the kind."

"I think I ought, Effie, and I think I shall."

After much persuasion, however, Ellen at last consented not to act upon this point of conscience until Julian was quite well, or, at least, so much better that there could be no risk from excitement. Ellen was to retain the fragments in her charge: she believed it to be her duty to keep them until they should be given up to the rightful owner.

"Effie," she said, as she was leaving the room, "is Captain Jefferson downstairs still?"

"No, dear; he has gone in to Glarisford, but he said he would be back to tea."

"Did he!" exclaimed Ellen, looking much frightened; "and did you tell him what I told you?"

"What was that, Nell? I don't recollect," said Effie, blushing.

"Did you tell him anything about me?"

"I do not think I did, but—"

Not allowing Effie time to finish her sentence, Ellen hastily shut the door, and returned to her own room. There was, she fancied, no time to be lost. She would paper up the dress, and give it to the young officer immediately on his return, and so end that portion of her troubles.

When, at about half-past six, Captain Jefferson entered the hall of Rose Cottage, Ellen was waiting for him, her parcel in her hand.

"Please come into the dining-room," she said, while her lips quivered; "I want to speak to you,"—and she led the way.

The young man followed, with alert footsteps, but with a failing heart. He thought that his worst fears were realised, and that all unintentionally, although not, he apprehended, without blame on his part, he had gained Ellen's affections. He was not much relieved when she carefully closed the door,

and laying her hand on the large paper parcel, said, "Captain Jefferson, this is the dress you gave me, please take it back, for I cannot wear it again, or keep it: I should never have taken it."

"But—but—" said the young officer, altogether at his wits' end as to what he ought to say; and scarcely knowing whether to be amused at the girl's simplicity, wounded by the return of his gift, or alarmed that this should be, as it appeared, the result of the declaration of his affection for Effie. "But—but—you will surely keep it, will you not?"

"I cannot; it would not be right. I was silly, and did not know; but now I am sure it would not be right."

This was sadly conclusive. Captain Jefferson looked despairingly out of the window in search of an idea, but finding none, he thought it would be better, perhaps, to come to the truth at once.

"But you would accept a present from me if I were your brother," he said.

"You are not my brother, Captain Jefferson." This Ellen knew was quite the thing to say on such an occasion.

"But I trust that I shall be your brother; your sister Effie has promised to be my wife."

"Effie!" exclaimed Ellen, opening wide her large eyes, and looking full into the young man's face. She could not, at first, realise such an astonishing fact—she had never thought of Effie being in love with, or marrying anyone, much less Captain Jefferson, whom she had always seemed rather to avoid. "Oh Julius!" she said at length, "I am so glad; but so very much surprised."

Then in an instant Captain Jefferson knew how matters stood—saw at once that it had been with a view of crushing his aspirations, with regard to herself, that Ellen had wished for this interview, and he could scarcely repress his merriment.

However, there was nothing unsuitable in smiling and looking very beaming as he said, "Did not Effie tell you of my happiness?"

"No," replied Ellen, thoughtfully; "but perhaps she would have told me all, but that I was only talking and thinking of myself. I am always doing so, Julius—always thinking of my own misery; but, nevertheless, I am very glad that Effie loves you, and very glad, too, that you are to be my brother."

Julius took her hand and pressed it warmly. "But, *your*

*misery, dear Ellen !*" he repeated, in a tone of much surprise ; " I do not understand ; *you* are not unhappy, surely ? "

" Oh, I am very, very miserable," sobbed Ellen, turning away. " I have done very wrong ; you, of all people, will never forgive me, never."

Then Ellen could not avoid telling what her misery was, and how very much she had been to blame with regard to Julian, as it had been in her power to have prevented all that had befallen him.

Captain Jefferson was very sorry, but was, at the same time, very sympathising and sensible in his advice and encouragement. In telling all this, it had been impossible for Ellen to conceal her affection for Julian, and Julius was about as much surprised at his brother's attachment as Ellen had been when she had heard of that of her sister. But on this subject he said very little ; he was not at all sure that all which had passed might not have considerably influenced his brother's affections, and, besides, Ellen conjured him not to speak of what she had told him to any person excepting Effie.

Jenny Tuff, entering the room with a rattling tray of tea-things, and finding Captain Jefferson and Ellen seated side by side in earnest and agitating conversation, did not know what to make of it.

Jenny was quite sure that the Captain had proposed for Miss Effie that very evening, and now he appeared to be saying the same to Miss Ellen. Maybe he was only trying to comfort the one that couldn't get him, for Jenny was not " fool enough " not to see he liked Miss Effie the best, nor to be blind to the fact that Miss Ellen was breaking her heart for somebody, which somebody she now felt quite sure was the Captain, and " no wonder," but " still, in all," thought Jenny, " it's not jest the thing for her to be crying that way, and him comforting her ; " and she went away shaking her head.

Dan Corr had asked her over and over again how things stood, but she had never given him much satisfaction, although she allowed him to understand that she knew a good deal. That night, when Dan dropped in for a cup of tea, Jenny's ignorance was complete—she appeared to have lost all clue to everything, except that both Miss Effie and Miss Ellen were the best and handsomest young ladies that ever were, and would make



wonderful matches some day or other ;" to which statement Dan replied, " Aye that ! supposin' they can catch the gintlemen," upon which Dan was summarily turned out of the kitchen, and the back-door locked behind him.

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Mr. and Mrs. Walker having given their approbation and consent to Captain Jefferson's suit, it was arranged that Effie and he should be married before the end of the year.

His going to India and remaining there—at least for some time—was unavoidable, and he was resolute as to not going without his wife.

This, however, did not make any alteration in the proposed visit to Arranmore, where Mrs. Walker was anxiously awaiting the coming of her father and daughters.

It was with very mingled feelings that Julian Jefferson learned the fact of his brother's engagement to Effie Walker. To himself, he did not believe it made, or would make, any difference ; and in the happiness both of Julius and Effie he would have rejoiced greatly, but believing, as he did, that his brother had gained Ellen's affections, he could not clear him from blame, and he feared that she might have much to suffer.

It so happened, that a few days after his engagement to Effie was made known, Captain Jefferson was obliged to accompany a part of his regiment as far as Portsmouth, where it was found necessary for him to remain for some weeks.

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## CHAPTER XL.

It was now the end of June, and six weeks had elapsed since the attempted murder.

To a certain point, Julian Jefferson's recovery had been rapid, much more so than any of the surgeons had anticipated ; but after that, after his wounds were healed, and there did not appear to be anything which should retard convalescence, there was no progress.

It was, as those who knew him best had feared, his system had received a shock from which it had not sufficient energy to rally. His weakness seemed rather to increase than to diminish ; and now the sultry summer days had come, making

him still more languid, and depriving him of any little strength which he possessed.

Samuel Ward had watched the invalid closely, listened to the opinions of all doctors, as well as nurses, and come to the conclusion, in his own mind, that although none of them were able to do anything, still something might be done, although he himself could not exactly see the way in which to do it. Pondering on this subject, he took his seat in the 10.30 train from Glarisford to Arranmore, on Sunday morning, the 27th of June. He was, as was natural under present circumstances, going to spend the day with his cousins, Sarah and Kitty, at Arranmore, where it was Sarah Stevens's custom to go every year for a month or two of sea air, and where she and her sister were at present located; there being, besides, the additional inducement of attending the little Quaker-meeting, which was, during the summer months, held in a Friend's parlour, at Arranmore, every "1st day" morning.

"I thought John Grant would have had more insight into things than to talk of hidden disease," said the old man to himself. "I don't understand the pulse, but I think I know this much: it is some weight on the poor boy's mind which is keeping him back. To be sure I'm not quite able to see why this should be the case, when he has so much besides, which one would think might make him inclined to recover. It would certainly be a cause of sincere regret to me if Cousin Kitty were to prefer some other Friend to myself, yet I doubt if the circumstance would permanently retard my convalescence were I ill, which, I am thankful to say, I never am. But then, persons are constituted differently. Julian has quite an uncommon constitution; and Ellen Walker did treat him badly. If she preferred Julius, she should have known her own mind earlier, and observed, too, that Julius did not prefer her. It is quite an uncomfortable state of things—quite uncomfortable; and really, now, I don't know that I should be sorry if the young woman were to suffer a little for it—I really don't know that I should be sorry."

Thus soliloquising, Samuel Ward reached Arranmore; and on the platform he saw Ellen Walker, standing along with her father, who had come to spend a few days with his family at the sea-side.

"Ah, h—" exclaimed the old man, and gathering up his coat and umbrella, he stepped out of the carriage and went forward to meet them.

After the first greetings were over, Mr. Walker, as was natural, enquired for Julian Jefferson's health; and Samuel Ward, who did not just then feel much desire to spare Ellen's feelings, recounted all the young man's worst symptoms; told of his increasing weakness, and the apprehensions of the surgeons, that there existed some hidden injury which their skill was unable to reach, not in the least softening this relation by any of the alleviating circumstances in which he himself believed; and saying, finally, as he took the turn to Sarah Stevens's house, "John Grant says, in fact, that doctors can do no more for him, and that his ultimate recovery is more than doubtful—fears, indeed, that he may not last much longer."

Ellen walked beside the two gentlemen cold and trembling, bright midsummer though it was, and felt every word which the old Quaker uttered strike like a poisoned arrow into her poor heart.

Mr. Walker was not an observant man, nor had he any idea that his daughter felt more interest in Julian than he himself did; and Samuel Ward, although not unwilling to inflict some punishment, had yet too much delicacy of feeling to watch whether his words produced any effect upon the girl—he looked straight before him while he spoke, and took no formal leave at parting, as it was probable they might meet again during the day.

Ellen went to morning service—she could not refuse to go, her father and mother would think it so strange; and she could not plead illness as an excuse for absenting herself. No, she was not ill, but suffering, oh so terribly!—what illness could be like it? Julian was dying, and she could never ask him to forgive her: he could never know how much she loved him, nor how her poor young heart was breaking for his sake.

She could not listen to the holy words of the church service, nor could she join in the prayers, excepting only that out of the depths of her heart rose the continual cry for mercy, mercy—healing for him; forgiveness for herself.

After church, Mr. Walker proposed a stroll along the sands. It was a lovely day, in the end of June—beautiful as mid-

summer could be, with bright blue sunny sky, and soft blue sunny sea, which murmured a low, sweet music as it broke in lines of snow-white foam along the yellow sand.

Effie, delighted to be with her father again, walked by his side, and would have had no drawback to her happiness, if she could have thought that those whom she loved were happy too; but she felt sorely grieved for Ellen, and she feared, too, from what she had heard, that there was little hope of Julian's recovery.

"You are tired, Nelly," said Mr. Walker, as he at last observed the jaded, harassed look which Ellen's face had of late so frequently worn, and which could now scarcely escape the notice even of a casual observer.

"Yes, I am a little tired," she replied, with a faint smile; "should you mind, papa, if I were to wait here until Effie and you come back?"

"No, Nelly; but I thought you would have come to show me the Dead Man's Cave."

"Oh papa, you could not go there."

"Well, at least, the way to it."

"Effie will show you it."

"For Captain Jefferson's sake—eh, Effie?" said Mr. Walker, patting the cheek on which his words called up a very pretty rosy hue.

"For your sake, papa, and no one else's," said Effie, smiling, as she clasped her hands round her father's arm.

"Aye, aye, my little girl, take care of your poor old father while you can; and the Captain 'll be a happy man to get you, I can tell him that much. Come along. We shall return this way, Nell, in time to bring you back to dinner."

Left alone, Ellen seated herself on a rock, the higher part of which sheltered her from the sun, which was now very warm. Not far from her feet the waves ran into a little cove—a slight indentation in the sand—partially surrounded by rocks, from which hung silky streamers of pale pink and green seaweed, that waved slowly backward and forward with the ebbing and returning waters. Out over the sunny sea the gulls wheeled to and fro in graceful sweeping flights; and down amongst the breakers the little divers rode gaily, now dashing beneath the curling waves, now sailing on the glassy unbroken surface. It

was a calm, sweet scene ; but there was no calm in Ellen's heart—no calmness in the large eyes which looked out over the ocean, gazing, but scarcely seeing what was before them.

“ Break, break, break,  
At the foot of thy crags, oh sea !  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.”

“ Never, never ! Oh ! what shall I do ? Worse—Mr. Ward said he was worse—dying, and I shall never see him, never tell him. Oh, I cannot bear it ! Oh, if I had died ten years ago in that cave yonder when I was a little happy child !” She clasped her hands upon her forehead, and two scalding tears broke from beneath her closed eyelids, and stole down the fair but now pallid cheeks.

From the rock on which she sat there was not much of the strand visible, and she did not observe that Samuel Ward was approaching until he was close beside her. Seeing him, she started violently, so as almost to alarm the good man, who after his quiet “ Meeting,” had come out to take a stroll along the sands before Sarah Stevens's dinner hour.

“ Is it Ellen Walker ?” he said, in some surprise. “ I thought I saw a woman sitting as if in distress.”

Ellen would have turned away—would have escaped if she could—but Samuel Ward was standing straight before her, and she had not had time even to hide her face, nor her hot, tearful eyes.

“ Art thou ill ?” he asked.

“ Yes, no, yes—I do not know whether I am or not ;” and then, as if moved by an impulse which she could not master, she looked up into his face and said, “ Mr. Ward, is he dying ? Is there no hope ?”

If Samuel Ward had not been the undemonstrative sober Friend he was, he would have given expression to his feelings by a long, low whistle, which would have said even more than words of the surprise as well as satisfaction which he experienced.

As it was, his mouth only became a little rounder, his eyes a little wider open, and the eyebrows more raised, so as to make the forehead form itself into long deep furrows beneath the broad hat brim which overshadowed it.

This expression was but an instant in passing over his face, and in a tone of voice which betokened real interest and solicitude he said, "Thou means Julian Jefferson, I believe? He is very ill. Dr. Grant fears that he can do nothing more for him."

Ellen shuddered, and grew deadly pale; but she did not withdraw her eyes from the face of the old man, who seemed to her like a judge pronouncing upon her a doom heavier than death.

"I said that Dr. Grant could do nothing more: I did not say that nothing more could be done."

"And surely—surely—they will do all for him that can be done," exclaimed Ellen, whilst the quick blood rushed back almost painfully to her face.

"So far, no means have been neglected which doctors or relatives thought might be of service. Tell me now, Ellen Walker, art thou attached to Julian Jefferson?"

Ellen buried her face in her hands.

"I see thou art: and I believe thou wert from the first. Tell me, for I am thy friend, and Julian's, much as if he was my own son, why didst thou deny thy regard for him?"

"I—I—oh, I thought he did not care for me."

"How wert thou led to suppose this? for now, really, in all my experience—" and taking off his hat, which the heat of the sun made oppressive, Samuel Ward looked out over the sea, as if his experience lay upon its sunny waters—"in all my experience, I never happened to see a more constant, or what might be called a more attentive, young man—really never. I thought he only erred toward thee in being too much so, and too forbearing, and that, possibly, that was what caused thee to turn against him, for I have heard of young women doing the like."

"I did not change toward him till—till—till——"

"Till what didst thou say?"

"Not till I heard him speak to you of me."

"Speak of thee to me!" and Samuel Ward, extremely mystified, seated himself upon the rock. "How was that?"

"I cannot tell."

"Yes, thou must tell me, Ellen. Wouldst thou have Julian die without letting him know that thou hast wronged

him?—for wronged him thou hast. Tell me all that thou canst recollect of what thou supposes he said to me.”

Samuel Ward seemed to Ellen still the stern judge to whom she must show her whole cause. She shivered again, and her voice trembled as she spoke.

“I heard you tell him that Mrs. Jefferson wished him to—to marry me, and he replied that—oh! I cannot say what words he said, and, besides, I heard other people talking, and—I could not bear it.”

“And where didst thou hear all these things? I have no recollection of speaking of thee to Julian. Matrimony is a subject in which I have always endeavoured not to meddle—at least, until quite lately. I think there must be some mistake.”

“No,” continued Ellen, in a trembling, almost inarticulate voice. “No; it was the evening Captain Jefferson came home, and you and Mr. Jefferson passed by the ruins, where I was sketching, and I tried not to listen, but, indeed, I could not help it, for you were close to me, although you did not see me.”

“My dear girl, thou hast acted with more than common foolishness,” said the old man, after a pause of a few minutes. “I recollect the circumstance now; as far as I am concerned in it, this is how it happened:—Sister Charlotte had a wish which, under the circumstances, I thought unwise, that thy sister, not thou, should be Julian’s choice, and I, in a light way—for which I now feel condemnation—mentioned this to him. Thou heard his reply—that is all. And now, I really think I may say,” continued Samuel Ward, turning and speaking as if to the ocean, “that I did not think anyone, not even a young woman, could have been so uncommonly foolish, and make such a mess out of nothing.”

Ellen had burst into tears, and was sobbing so hysterically as to alarm her companion.

“Dear, dear!” he exclaimed, rising to his feet, and “dear, dear!” he reiterated, looking helplessly round. “If Sister Charlotte were here she would know what to do at once; or if I had only a smelling-bottle, but I never had the like in my life. Dost thou think thou wilt soon be better?” he asked, looking down at the weeping girl. “Oh!” as a bright idea struck him, “I’ll hasten back to Arranmore and bring Cousin

Kitty: this is just the kind of thing she would understand."

"No, Mr. Ward, no," said Ellen, catching his arm to detain him, and looking up through her tears. "I want nothing—nothing in the world, but for you to go back to Holybrook and ask Julian, if he can, to forgive me before he dies—before I die, for I cannot, cannot bear it."

"Take my arm," said Samuel Ward, "and we shall walk back to thy father's lodgings. I am quite encouraged to hope that neither of you are likely to die just at present. Compose thyself, and do not hurry. There is no train by which I can return until five o'clock. If thou wishes to go with me, or to send a message by me, I shall do what I can. Wilt thou come with me?"

"Oh no, no," said Ellen, stopping short. "I shall never go to Holybrook again—I shall never see Julian. I only wish you to tell him how deeply grieved I have been for all that he has suffered during his illness, and ask him to forgive me for the——" she paused, and her voice faltered—"for the—yes they *were* lies which I told him. I am going to India with Effie and Julius when they are married, and I shall never come back to this country again."

"Ah well, that is better, at least, than saying that thou wilt die—but we shall see."

Walking along the quiet sands, supported by Samuel Ward's substantial arm, Ellen felt, although no more was said, that there was some consolation stealing into her heart, partly, perhaps, from the reaction after such strong emotion, but more from the gleam of comfort which the old man's words afforded. Some way the brilliant sunshine was not so oppressive as it had been, and the clear blue sky and glancing waters wore a different aspect.

Samuel Ward conveyed his charge safely back to Arranmore, and, delivering her to her mother's care, returned to tell Mr. Walker that his daughter had gone home.

Mrs. Walker was alone in the little drawing-room which overlooked the sea.

She had been suffering much from anxiety on Ellen's account. The poor girl's care-worn look and changed manner made her sure that all was not right, and that she was ailing.



either mentally or physically. And now, when Ellen returned from her walk with pale cheeks and heavy eyelids, her mother felt sure that some serious illness must be impending.

"My darling child," she exclaimed, as they entered, "you are ill. What is it?" and she looked from Ellen to Samuel Ward.

Ellen, no longer able to maintain the control which she had heretofore exercised over her feelings, burst into tears, and threw her arms round her mother's neck; while the old man, feeling that he was "not in his place," left the room, and, as we have before said, returned to the strand.

Poor Ellen told all her troubles, and received from her mother the tender sympathy and comfort which her own silence alone had, until now, withheld from her.

Grieved and sorry as she was, Mrs. Walker could not now blame—could only try to console her poor suffering child, suffering though she were from her own faults; nor could she easily see what course it would be right to pursue. Perhaps the message which Ellen told her she had sent by Samuel Ward would be sufficient.

"I told Mr. Ward," Ellen had said, "to say nothing to Julian—nothing whatever, except that his illness had caused me deep sorrow, and to ask him to forgive me before he died."

Mrs. Walker anxiously awaited her husband's return, and when he came, she took him aside and told him the whole of the affair as distinctly as she was able.

"A pretty mess indeed!" said Mr. Walker, when she had ended. "The fact is, you should never have allowed Ellen out of your own sight—she wants more training: she's something like myself, and would 'cut off her nose to vex her face' when her spirit's up."

"But what ought we to do now?" asked Mrs. Walker, looking anxiously into her husband's face.

"Do, my dear! I don't see that we can do anything. The child refused him, you say. Does she wish me to go and refuse him a second time?"

"But you don't understand, Charles—you don't see how our darling is fading away."

"I am not so blind as you suppose, Marion; and though I think she deserves to suffer a bit—for she treated the poor young fellow very badly—do you know that in some ways it is

quite a relief to me. I saw she was fretting, and I was afraid it was for the Captain, and that, you know, would be very awkward. She can go to India now with him and Effie, as they're only to stay out a year or two, and you'll find she'll be all right when she comes back, and have quite forgotten this moonstruck young favourite of your sister Margaret's, and I am sure she's much better without him for that matter!"

"But Julian Jefferson is a most excellent young man. Margaret knows him thoroughly, and I am sure we may depend on her judgment."

"Aye, I daresay you'd trust to her judgment sooner than to mine; but neither you nor Margaret would ever think whether a man had enough to support a wife or not, if only he knew a little poetry, and had fine feelings. Perhaps I should be the last to complain of that," he continued, with a smile, "though whether I had any of these qualifications when you married me I can't say."

"But, my dear Charles, if that be all, you know the Jeffersons are wealthy people compared to us."

"Aye, I suppose so, if they knew how to keep things together; but be that as it may—and, indeed, for that very reason I'm not going to stir a finger in the matter—I shan't offer my pretty girl to him and most likely be told that he doesn't want her: for I'm sure she has acted in a manner that has probably turned his regard into dislike!"

"It would be different if he were well; but you know Dr. Grant, indeed all the doctors, have but little hope of his recovery."

"Then I'm sure it's better not to disturb his mind any more about this matter. A sick man loses sight of all these things, and only thinks of his pains and aches. Indeed, Marion, the family would only be displeased with us, and with cause, if we were to make any advances now. Nelly will be all right in time you'll find; but for the present, I'm afraid she must reap as she has sown. If it had all gone on right I shouldn't have objected, I suppose, though I'd be sorry to lose both my girls at once; and Julian's not half the man his brother is."

So Mrs. Walker let the matter rest—what could she do? or, indeed, what present consolation could she offer to her daughter?

Julian, as far as they knew, was dying from the effect of his wounds; and although Ellen had been much to blame, it was now too late to rectify her folly, and in the young man's state, agitation of mind was, as they thought, sure to prove dangerous, if not fatal.

The season of comparative tranquillity which Ellen had experienced after her conversation with Samuel Ward was of very short duration. She had sent a message to Julian, and, perhaps, it had been right for her to do so; but what would he think when he received it? He would forgive her she knew—he might pity her; but would he not smile at her folly and weakness, and think her well deserving of anything she might suffer? No, she knew he would not, tender-hearted, noble, generous, as he was. Oh! what had she done when she had scorned and tried to wound such a heart as his? And now it was all irretrievable—too late for her in any way to make amends.

Poor Ellen, as she looked out upon the wide blue ocean on that Sabbath evening, felt that her punishment was greater than she could bear, and longed that she were but at rest, and quiet beneath the tranquil waters.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

JULIAN JEFFERSON'S wounds being quite healed, there was no risk in removing him to the library, where he now generally remained the greater part of the day, dressed, and lying upon a sofa, placed near the windows, that he might have the advantage of the mountain view, which he had always enjoyed so much. He had been so placed when Samuel Ward had left Holybrook for Arranmore on that Sunday morning, and had been looking so much more weak and languid than usual as greatly to disturb the mind of his old friend, and make him more anxious than ever to seek some remedy ere it was too late.

Towards evening the invalid rallied a little; and Mrs. Jefferson, when she had seen that he partook with a little more appetite than before of the delicate nourishment which she had provided for him, went down to evening service at the little church, leaving Margaret Grey to take her place as nurse.

The evening was very warm, and Julian, overcome with the heat, had fallen asleep, whilst Margaret sat silently beside his couch. It was an uneasy slumber, and he muttered a few words often, as if dreaming. Yet the entrance of John Grant did not disturb him, although the doctor stood for some time beside the sofa, felt his pulse, and pushed back the thick clinging hair from his forehead.

"Very low and feverish," said Dr. Grant, in answer to Margaret's look of anxious enquiry. "There seems no spring, no elasticity, to enable him to rise above the shock which his nerves have sustained."

"But do you not fear to wake him?" asked Margaret, as the doctor again took the thin hand.

"No; I should rather see him awake than sleeping in this way. His sleep is so deep that it would not be easy to waken him; yet I fear there is little refreshment in it."

"But this must not continue," said Margaret. "Can we do nothing but watch him fading away before our eyes?"

"It is a case beyond my skill, Miss Grey—beyond the skill of any physician, I believe—a complication which none of us have skill to cure."

"Could he have change of air?"

"It would be a great risk—I don't say it would be impossible. Has he ever spoken to you of anything preying on his mind?" and John Grant looked keenly and questioningly at Margaret.

"I fear his mind is not quite at rest," she replied, "nor can we, I believe, make it so."

"Ah!" said the doctor, and he turned away, observing that Margaret did not wish to continue the subject. "There is some hidden ailment, either of mind or body," he continued—"there may be an injury more deeply seated than we have yet been able to discover. Poor boy! he has been delicate from his childhood, and although he had grown so much stronger of late, we have little to build on. Yet, such is the power of the mind over the body, it is possible that some great happiness—the lifting off of this weight, if there be such, which is oppressing him—might restore him as if by a miracle. Those delicately-strung nerves of his have not power to fight against, or to overcome bodily weakness, unless they were themselves in

full tune, then they would be able for anything—Julian might be anything under favourable circumstances. Poor boy !” and again John Grant shaded the thick, damp hair from the forehead of the sleeper ; “ and yet, I don’t know that such as he are to be pitied. Common men are made of such coarse clay, that I often think their minds can bear anything without their bodies being a whit worse—they eat well, they sleep well, and Heaven knows they suffer well too. Shall I be too late for evening service ?” he continued, looking at his watch. “ Good-bye: I shall be in time for the blessing, at all events.”

“ He will, indeed, be in time for a blessing, sooner or later,” thought Margaret, as Dr. Grant left the room, softly closing the door behind him. Then seating herself near the window, she looked out upon the mountain sides, where the shadows were lengthening, and the brilliant sunshine changing to the mellow hues of evening, and thoughts and memories pursued each other in quick succession through her mind. She thought of the years of her early youth, their happiness and their bitter sorrows ; of that one fearful sorrow which had dimmed all her after life—dimmed, but not darkened. No, there had been so much left—so much to be thankful for and to value, and life had become almost bright again until this last blow came, renewing all her sorrow, and making the old wounds bleed again. She loved Julian dearly, and keenly felt for his sufferings and his sorrows, and for her niece’s share in them ; nor could she cease to blame herself, or feel sure that she had done her part in guiding and caring for Ellen’s impetuous nature.

But was there still anything which she could do ? A great happiness, Dr. Grant had said—the lifting off of the weight which oppressed him—might still save his life. But where was that happiness to come from ? not from poor foolish heartless Ellen—for Margaret did not believe that she had ever really cared for either of the brothers, but had, perhaps, found more amusement in the society of Julius.

She looked at the calm, pale face of the sleeper, almost as pale as death itself, except where a bright red tinge, more fearful than pallor, glowed on his cheeks. While she looked, his eyelids slowly opened, and glancing toward her with a smile, he said, “ I have been sleeping, Margaret, and dreaming bright

dreams. I may dream now ; although if it had been my lot to remain longer in this world, I should have endeavoured to apply myself more to its realities—things which I looked upon but as obstructions—stumbling-blocks—only to be kicked out of the path to higher things, but which I now see are the ordinances of God—the steps by which those who use them rightly may ascend to Him. If my life had been spared, I should, I believe, have tried to overcome those foibles and fancies which, given way to, as I did give way to them, I now see to have been my besetting sins. I should have endeavoured to think more of others—less of my own dreams.”

“You must try to live, Julian.”

“Try to live !” he repeated ; “ah yes, you think I ought, but I cannot try to do anything now, I am so weary ; through very weariness I long to lay me down and be at rest—and rest will soon come to me. See,” he said, after a pause, “how lovely the evening light is as it falls upon Lugderrig and Knock-duff. How I have loved those mountains, where I must wander no more ! Margaret, I can scarcely tell you how bright my life had in those last few weeks become—earth seemed all glowing with a new light—a new life seemed opening before me, when suddenly one touch, and all the fabric crumbled into dust—the airy fabric which I had built, without any foundation, for, indeed, I do not blame her, not even in thought. How could she do otherwise than prefer my brother to me. Women do not care for such poor dreamers as I am ; and yet, for her sake, I feel that I could have been almost anything. Yes, even now, if I were spared, I would strive, aye, and I think—Heaven helping me—I could conquer too, struggling to do my day’s work, whatever should betide ; but this poor body of mine is done for, I have no chance of fighting, and maybe it is so best : it might be but a miserable failure after all. ‘Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that taketh it off !’”

“Dear Julian ! Dr. Grant says that he can now discover nothing astray but weakness : your wounds are all healed. Oh, if you could only gain strength !”

“That is a serious ‘if’ for a man who is scarcely able to walk.”

“But change of air might strengthen you. You might go to Arranmore.”

A sudden flush overspread the young man's face.

"Your sister's family are there," he said.

"Yes; but they soon intend to return home."

"It would do me no good," he said after a pause, "even if I were able for the short journey; but—but, Margaret, I *should* like to see Ellen before—before it is too late. I should like to tell her myself that I do not blame her, not in my inmost heart."

"I do not know that that would be best, when she acted certainly in a manner which was not right."

"No, it was I alone who deceived myself. Do you think it would be wrong for her to come to see me before I die?"

"Julian, you must not die," said Margaret, whilst she took the thin hand within her own, and looked with tearful eyes into his face. "Dr. Grant is certain that you might recover, if only—"

"Everything in this world seems to hang upon 'ifs' and 'onlys,'" said Julian, with a sad smile. "Is that my mother coming in from church?"—and in answer to his question Mrs. Jefferson opened the door and entered, looking hot and flurried.

"Well, mother, I hope Tatlow gave you a good sermon; you look rather tired."

"Yes, yes, my boy; you know it's a warm evening, and the little rise up the avenue always puts me out of breath," said Mrs. Jefferson, as she took a seat, and while she untied her bonnet strings looked anxiously at her stepson. "However, Dr. Grant gave me his arm up from the church, though I can't say he helped me either, and we met Samuel at the door. I told them both to go into the drawing-room at once, and not to come in here any more to-night to disturb you."

"Oh no, you must all come and have your tea here with me. It would disturb me much more to be left in solitude. You look as if you wanted your tea, and I am sure I want mine."

"Well, dear, well," said Mrs. Jefferson, while her face brightened, "I am sure we all like much better to be with you. I shall tell Dr. Grant and Samuel to come in; and order tea directly." Then Mrs. Jefferson left the library, and hastening to the drawing-room she exclaimed, in a tone as

near complaint as her full, comfortable voice could assume, "What did you mean, Doctor?—He's not a bit worse, that I can see. You needn't have frightened me that way. I declare, from what you said, I didn't know what way I might find him. But now, thank goodness! he's wishing for his tea; and that's the best sign can be. He never seemed anxious for tea before, during all his illness. And he says we must all go into the library, and have it with him. Go you, and I'll be there in a moment. He seemed glad to hear that you were come home, Samuel."

Margaret had gone to the garden, and gathered two bunches of roses and such sweet-scented flowers as always gave the invalid most pleasure, and when the tea things were spread for the guests, and two vases of flowers placed, one beside the open window, and one on the centre of the tea table, the room wore quite a festal appearance.

Dr. Grant questioned the propriety of even this slight excitement, in Julian's weak state, for the brightness of his eyes, and the two crimson spots which glowed on his cheeks, told both of weakness and fever, and both these symptoms visibly increased, although the Doctor could observe nothing in the conversation which seemed of an exciting nature. It was principally between Mrs. Jefferson and her brother, the former asking questions about Cousin Kitty and their friends at Arranmore; the latter answering in monosyllables, whilst he stirred his tea with a persistency which made Mrs. Jefferson at last conclude that there was something serious on his mind, and fear that a "difficulty" might have arisen between him and Cousin Kitty, or more probably that Sarah Stevens had been interfering again.

Samuel Ward did now, after what he would himself have called much exercise of mind, see his way clear as to what he ought to do, his conclusion being that he would consult no one—neither the Doctor, who might think it unsafe, nor the parents, who might think it unsuitable—but simply tell Julian that Ellen Walker had suffered severely from her self-imposed estrangement.

He did not, however, intend to say anything of this until the following morning, but after tea Julian begged him to remain. "I have tired out all my nurses," said the young



man, smiling, "but you I mean to impose on, as you have had so much of the fresh sea air to-day, and I hope you will stay with me while my mother and Margaret go out among the flowers this lovely summer evening."

"Ah yes, really now, I'm quite pleased to stay with thee, Julian," said Samuel Ward, resuming his seat when the others had left the room, and he and Julian were left alone. At the same time, he played a little uneasily with his bunch of seals; then with a hand at each side he pulled down the flaps of his large waistcoat, and concluded his sentence with a long interrogative "ye—s?"

There certainly was some slight mental reservation with regard to the "pleasure" it gave him to remain just at that time; and he felt somewhat nervous, and not quite so sure of the propriety of speaking then as when he thought the time further off. What if the information which he had to give should overexcite the invalid? What if it should not prove acceptable? Besides, even to a mind as well-regulated as was that of Samuel Ward, it appeared rather easier to speak on a critical subject to-morrow than to-day.

"You saw all our friends at Arranmore?" said Julian, while he fixed his eyes on the old man with an earnest gaze, which said much more than his words.

"Indeed, quite so, yes. Had a very comfortable little sitting with friends."

"You did not *sit* all this lovely day, I suppose?"

"No, really no, I took a walk. Yes, I took a walk."

"It is a delightful place for anyone who can walk."

"Yes, I took a walk—quite so, yes," repeated Samuel Ward, becoming every moment more uneasy.

"Did Aunt Kitty go with you, or were you alone?"

"No; Cousin Sarah thought well of keeping Kitty with herself, and I walked down the sands alone, until I happened to meet—that is, I saw and went to a—a friend."

"Indeed! who was the friend?" asked Julian, half amused by the evident perplexity of the old man, and a little moved too by some prevision as to what subject was to follow.

"I assure thee I had no view of the kind when I went out, and it was quite unexpected to myself."

"You are opening your mouth in dark sayings, Mr. Ward."

What was so unexpected to you? You must speak more plainly, or I cannot understand you. Who did you meet?"

"Well, thou sees, as I was going to meeting I met Charles Walker, and I told him that thou wert not mending as rapidly as we could wish, and, thou sees, he was not alone when I informed him of this, though at the time I did not think it my place to observe whether or not my remarks made any impression; but, as I said before, in the course of the afternoon I found the dear young woman sitting on a rock, evidently in much distress—really, now, quite overcome."

"Who was sitting on a rock? who was overcome?"

"Thou sees, she acted on a mistaken idea, and I think it would be right for thee to overlook it."

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Ward, tell me what you are talking about," cried Julian, raising himself suddenly on his couch, whilst a quick flush overspread his countenance. "Speak to me in plain English, or not at all. I am very weak, and cannot bear this."

"Dear, dear!—yes, yes!" exclaimed Samuel Ward, becoming alarmed, and more at his wits' end than even during his interview with Ellen: the way he had thought so clear was growing very obscure, and lest it might close altogether he rushed suddenly to the point. "Thou hast or hadst a preference for Ellen Walker," he said.

The young man leaned back upon his pillows. "Preference," he repeated—"Yes, Mr. Ward, if you mean by preference the whole love of my heart—its first love and its last—I have a preference for Ellen Walker."

"Oh my! Now dost not thou think thy expressions seem a little strong, as used to explain thy feelings towards a fellow-creature?"

Julian did not answer for a few moments; then he said, "He who made the human heart with all its wants, and its capabilities, knows that such love as I feel for her has rather given me power to comprehend in a measure that which is infinite."

"It is not a matter which I have much studied," said Samuel Ward; "but might I ask thee if the young woman did not act—now what thou might call a little uncomfortably?"

"I shall never blame—did never blame her—for preferring my brother to me."

"Dear, dear! But it seems to me she didn't do so; and for whatever she did—as to which, I allow, I don't feel quite clear myself—she is very sorry—is—if I might use such an expression—very penitent, and she wishes thee to forgive her."

"Why do you say these things, Mr. Ward? I am very weak, and cannot bear them. I have nothing to forgive. Love such as mine knows no such word."

"I wish I had brought Kitty," said the old man, half aloud; "I do not understand these things—never was accustomed to them. Julian, my dear," he continued, raising his voice, "Ellen Walker is, I believe I may say, as much attached to thee as thou thyself art to her. It was through some mistake, which I hope she may be able to explain to thee when you meet, that her manner toward thee changed so suddenly. She never had any particular regard for thy brother, or for any other person. She acted foolishly, no doubt; but this is, I understand, the case with most young women. She may have some—in fact, I think I may say has a considerable want of sense, but thou may believe me, she has no want of affection for thee."

Julian looked up incredulously, and laying his hand on the old man's shoulder, as if to assure himself that he was not a phantom, but as solid a reality as he appeared to be, said—"Mr. Ward, if you do not wish me to lose my reason, tell me all you know; I must hear everything."

Thus conjured, Samuel Ward did tell all that had occurred during his interview with Ellen.

When Mrs. Jefferson, some time after, entered the room, she at once observed the change which had passed over her step-son's countenance, and with the eye of an experienced nurse, she foresaw all good. There was a softened lustre in his eyes now which had nothing to do with fever, and although the face was paler than before, the drawn look of suffering had altogether disappeared.

"You're better, my boy," she said, as she laid her hand affectionately on his head.

"Yes, mother," he said, looking up into her face. "Mr.

Ward is the best doctor among them all, and perhaps I shall disappoint the other fellows by living a while longer."

Mrs. Jefferson saw at once that there was something more than she knew, but she was too prudent to ask any questions. "Dr. Grant has remained to see that you are safely moved back to your room," she said; "and you had better go soon, my dear, before you are too tired."

"Not until we have evening prayers all together. I should like it to-night, mother. Ask Dr. Grant and Margaret to come in."

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## CHAPTER XLII.

JULIAN JEFFERSON'S was not the only heart in that little company which was filled with gratitude for sudden and unexpected joy, nor to whom the words of thanksgiving, although so often before repeated, seemed to acquire a new and beautiful meaning. There is something overpowering, almost bewildering, in the sudden change from despondency and sorrow to hope and joy, which, although it rather sits in silence, because language seems at first inadequate for its expression, yet finds that the old familiar words fall sweetly on the ear, clothed now with a beauty and fullness, before but dimly seen or scarcely suspected.

That Sunday was a red-letter day to Dr. Grant as well as to Julian Jefferson. When, after tea, Dr. Grant, Mrs. Jefferson, and Margaret Grey had left the chamber of the invalid, they had gone out together into the garden to enjoy the sweet, soft air of the summer evening. It was lovely weather, and the Abbey gardens were gorgeous in their summer bloom of roses, lilies, stocks, and all old-fashioned flowers, sweet and fair, beside numberless new-fashioned flowers, rich and rare. For some time Mrs. Jefferson, the Doctor, and Margaret walked up and down the broad promenade before the conservatories, enjoying the loveliness around them, until the elder lady, becoming uneasy with regard to some matters which were in preparation for Julian, returned to the house.

There was promise of a beautiful sunset, to obtain a better view of which Margaret and Dr. Grant betook themselves to

the upper end of the garden, which commanded a full view of the glowing western sky, while beneath, the broad smooth bend of the river reflected back the gorgeous colouring.

"It will be still more lovely when the sun has quite gone down," said Margaret, "for now the brightness is almost dazzling."

"Summer dews are very heavy," said Dr. Grant; "shall you be afraid to remain out until the sun is set?"

"I! Oh no; the air is delightful."

"But, naturally, you will wish to return to the house as soon as possible; you will not like to leave Julian alone much longer, when your presence is so much to him."

Margaret looked up enquiringly. "You see some unfavourable symptom of which you have not told me?"

"No," said Dr. Grant; "I told you everything. His wounds are healed: he might be as well as ever before the summer is over; but I am sure his mind is not at rest, and while this is the case he cannot and will not recover." He paused; then looking straight into Margaret's face, he said, "Miss Grey, have you it in your power to set his mind at rest?"

Margaret looked as fully and enquiringly into the Doctor's face, but with an expression of such complete mystification that his countenance gradually changed. "In my power?" she said at last, rather sorrowfully. "Ah no, Dr. Grant. If you mean it is Julian's disappointment with regard to Ellen which is preying on his mind, what can I do? I know that she has treated him very badly, and I cannot tell you how much I blame myself for having left the girls as I did, but that cannot be helped now;" and Margaret looked sadly toward the setting sun, whilst something in her sorrow seemed to call up a hopeful expression to the face of the generally kind and sympathising doctor.

"Ellen!" he repeated. "You mean Ellen Walker?"

"Yes," replied Margaret; "but she is very young, and scarcely perhaps knew her own mind; is now, I am sure, much grieved for him, and if she could return his love I believe he might yet recover, and we might all be happy again."

"Margaret!" cried Dr. Grant, while all the sunny glow which was blazing in the western sky seemed reflected in his

face—"Margaret, this is the third time I have asked you. Could you care at all for me? You know, or, rather, you can never know how much I love you. Could you consent to be my wife?"

This seemed rather irrelevant to the previous conversation, but it was not so in Dr. Grant's mind. Margaret withdrew her eyes from the far-off golden clouds, and turning them to her companion's face, seemed for a moment to read its expression. Then she said, "For many, many years you have possessed my sincerest respect, esteem, and friendship; the last six weeks have taught me that I could give you more—could return the regard which you have expressed for me. I believe I do now feel for you the affection of which I have long known you to be worthy."

They said much more which it is not necessary, and might not be interesting to relate; such conversations have seldom much interest for any except the two immediately concerned: to them they are, for the time, all-absorbing. When Dr. Grant and Margaret returned to the library, life seemed to both of them to have assumed a new aspect.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

JULY is, in this country, generally the wettest month in the year, and its lowering thunderous skies, although they sometimes allow the sun to look out bright and burning, are far more ready to weep than to smile. Nevertheless, it does sometimes happen that July is fine, and when it is so it is the very pride of the summer, warmer and more brilliant than June, and without a touch of the coming decadence of which, with all its gorgeous colouring, August gives many a hint. The weather, in this month of July to which our story has now brought us, was one of these exceptions, as bright and as beautiful as weather is ever known to be in these northern latitudes. The mornings were bright and sweet, the mid-days burning and splendid, the evenings soft and lovely.

Any persons who were fortunate enough to be at the seaside would not willingly leave it, and those who were inland

longed for a breath of the fresh sea air. Mrs. Stevens, who, although of course she complained of it, enjoyed warm weather as much as a cat enjoys a good fire, would now have been more comfortable than usual if Kitty had not been so provokingly happy, and so intolerably busy. What was the worst feature of the case, however, was that the little old maid had evidently got from under her elder sister's control and governance; not but that Mrs. Stevens took every opportunity of telling her that she was foolish and indiscreet; that no happiness ever came of such a marriage as she was about to make; always winding up with the assurance that she, Sarah Stevens, had known from the first how it would end, and that Cousin Samuel ought to have staid at home, and attended to his house, his business, and the affairs of the meeting, instead of allowing such folly to enter his head.

Kitty, however, only smiled; was sure sister meant it for her good; and as soon as the lecture was ended, went out for a walk along the sea shore.

Another aggravation to Sarah Stevens was that about the middle of July, Kitty had evidently become possessed of some new secret. She was receiving a number of letters by post, besides those weighty epistles from Samuel Ward, written on thick blue wove post, very large as to envelope, sealing-wax, and writing, but by no means voluminous or lively as to the matter therein contained; for, excellent man as he was, and much as Kitty honoured and esteemed him, even she could not say that Cousin Samuel wrote "a good letter." To these letters Mrs. Stevens had brought her mind as to an inevitable evil; but those others with the Glarisford post-mark—turn them up, turn them down, turn them sideways—she could not find out who they were from, and Kitty would not enlighten her. She had never seen the writing before, nor did she recognise the seal. There were others which she knew were from Mrs. Jefferson, and a few from Margaret Grey, but her sister did not seem disposed to allow her the perusal even of these.

Besides, Kitty was continually taking walks along the cliffs, towards a cove about a quarter-of-a-mile from Arranmore, where Mrs. Stevens knew there was but one house, untenanted, except by a caretaker, a deaf old woman—so deaf that even if

she were objectionable it would have been difficult for Kitty to make her acquaintance.

The Cove was not far from the "Dead Man's Cave," and was not more than a quarter-of-a-mile wide at its opening; on either side rose high headlands, half cliff, half grassy bank, on which grew the hardy but graceful sea-fern, the slender blue *complanula*, sea-pinks, saxefruges, and many more of the delicate-looking little flowers which choose for themselves the light soil and fresh air of our shores.

Enclosed between the two headlands lay a silvery strand, on which in this summer time the waves washed softly, coming and going with the ebbing and flowing tide, but always leaving some space of smooth, hard sand, and never reaching the soft, green turf which adorned the upper end of the Cove, where stood the pretty summer residence which Mrs. Stevens, the third day after it transpired that Kitty *had* a secret, was sure her sister visited; and now the awful suspicion began to dawn upon her mind that Kitty and Samuel were about to be married unknown to her, either by that "light and new-fashioned 'registration business,' or worse still, by a 'hireling minister,' contrary to the rules of their society;" for really, since that affair of the entertainment at Holybrook, she had lost confidence even in Samuel; as for Kitty, she had never had any in her. Still, she scarcely believed that she would have been so very indiscreet as to fit up a house for Samuel, instead of Samuel fitting it up for her, which duty, if they were so foolish as to marry, he certainly ought to have undertaken.

It was agreeable, however, to have come to some conclusion, as all allow that suspense is worse than certainty; and on this third day, Kitty having gone out at the usual hour, and being likely soon to return, Mrs. Stevens sat herself down in a window which commanded a full view of the way by which the delinquent must come, and putting on her spectacles waited in awful silence. Mrs. Walker and her daughters came to visit her, but she soon made it plain to them by her manner, that their absence would be more agreeable to her than their presence.

They told her that Captain Jefferson, who for some weeks had been absent on duty, was coming to Arranmore that evening. She did not want to hear any more about such foolish



things; Kitty and Samuel were enough for her—far too much. She would not accept a pattern of knitting in the new Leviathan wool which Effie brought her; and she told Mrs. Walker it was full time for her to take Ellen back to Lowbridge, as she was losing at the seaside all the little good looks which she used to boast of.

The ladies, thus received, soon went away; and Mrs. Stevens resumed her watch, looking sterner than before. But Kitty did not return—no, not for two hours—not till Anne Dempsey had spread the tea things, and the clock was striking half-past six. Then she saw her sister's spare figure against the blue sky, as she came towards her along the cliff walk. She was not alone. There was a man with her; it must be Samuel; and she prepared herself still more for the battle.

But the figures came nearer; and she felt—not that she would have acknowledged this, even to herself—but she certainly did feel rather disappointed to see that it was only her nephew, John Grant, who accompanied Kitty. She would have been pleased to see the doctor's cheery face at any other time, but her tongue was so well prepared for delivering a severe lecture, that it was not so easy to change its tones to a welcome.

"Take off thy bonnet at once, Kitty," she said, when they entered. "I have been kept waiting for my tea too long already. I hope thou hast done with thy strange wanderings, for to-day at least."

"Yes," said John Grant, "Aunt Kitty has done, and done well; nothing can be nicer than all the arrangements which she has made at the Cove House. Mrs. Jefferson and I brought Julian out this evening, and he is nothing the worse of the journey; nothing wrong with him now except a little weakness, and if all goes on well, this fine air will soon make him as strong as ever he was."

"And is this all that Kitty has been making such a fuss and nonsense about!" exclaimed Mrs. Stevens, who felt really aggrieved by such a flat termination to the frightful edifice she had erected in her own mind. "Well, really, I believe Kitty is weaker even than I supposed. Why need she make a mystery of bringing that boy to the seaside?"

"We were not sure that he would have been able for the journey, and there were other reasons also. Can I have my tea now, Aunt Kitty? I'd have no objection to some ham and eggs, if Anne has time to fry them, for I dined early."

"I'm sure they might at least have given Kitty and thee your tea, after putting you to so much trouble."

"And kept you waiting still longer, Aunt?"

"I doubt if either thou or Kitty thought about my tea, one way or other; if you had done so, you would have known that I was sure to have lost all appetite long before this, and Charlotte ought to have given you your tea. I hope at least that thou art to have, or rather that thou hast received, a good fee for all thy trouble."

"I am to have a most disproportionately large fee, Aunt," replied John Grant, with a merry gleam in his eyes—"one which I expect will keep me in good humour for the remainder of my life."

"What dost thou say?" said Mrs. Stevens, eagerly; "the Jeffersons are not in a position to do such things, but they have always been reckless and imprudent in spending their money, which is the reason that they have not more, for if the estate had been better looked to they would have had plenty, and ought to have paid thee well."

"But this particular fee is not given by the Jeffersons."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Stevens, knitting her brows; "and do they leave it to Cousin Samuel to pay thee? that is worse even than I imagined."

"No, no, Aunt; but, laying joking aside, Julian has paid me very liberally, much more so than I wished. As to what I spoke of—what his illness seems to have in some way gained for me at last—it is a priceless gift, and one of which I only pray I may prove myself worthy."

Kitty, who had during their walk along the cliff path been told by her nephew of his happy prospects, now sat down on the sofa and began to cry.

"Nonsense, Kitty," said Mrs. Stevens, sharply; "what dost thou mean, John? there is nothing but secret after secret now."

"Well, Aunt, you will, I think, rejoice with me in what I

have to tell you, which need be a secret no longer. Margaret Grey has at last consented to be my wife—at last returns some of the affection which I believe you know has been hers for many a long year.

Mrs. Stevens was about to return a querulous answer, and to complain that her nephew was no better than all the rest; but looking at his pleasant face, all beaming with happiness and contentment, and remembering that no son could have been kinder and more attentive to her than he had always proved himself, she said what, forgetting all selfish considerations, she really felt. “*I am pleased, John, really pleased. Thou deserves a good wife, if any man does, and I think Margaret is an estimable young woman.*” So saying, she kissed her nephew affectionately. Observing that this little scene had greatly increased Kitty’s emotion, she turned sharply to her sister —“Come, come, Kitty,” she exclaimed, “why can’t thou fill out tea at once? I believe thou dost not care how long thou keeps John starving with thy crying and nonsense. I think, considering what thou art going to do thyself, thou might conduct thyself a little more reasonably.”

“You think she ought to have a fellow-feeling for a companion in misfortune?”

“Tut, tut, John, come to tea. I really feel quite in a whirl. I hope my tea may be the means of steadying me a little.”

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## CHAPTER XLIV.

It was late that evening when Captain Jefferson arrived at Arranmore. For reasons best known to himself, he did not go to the Cove House, nor tell Mr. Walker’s family that Mrs. Jefferson and Julian had come to the seaside. He spoke as if he had left them at the Abbey, where in reality he had last seen them. He only said that his brother was much better, and that all the doctors agreed that change of air would complete his cure. Nor did he even tell any more to Effie in the pleasant walk they took along the moonlit strand. The fact was he felt somewhat alarmed as to the effect that this renewed excitement might have on his brother’s health, and

also feared that if Ellen were made aware of Julian's near proximity, her impulsive nature, combined with the almost morbid feelings which now preyed upon her mind, might cause her to leave Arranmore without seeing him, or to take some other step equally foolish and unnecessary.

He slept at the Hotel, but returned betimes to Mr. Walker's lodgings, where he breakfasted. When the meal was ended, he asked Effie and Ellen to come out for a walk along the cliffs before the sun became too warm. Ellen was unwilling to go, fearing that she might spoil the walk for her companions; but Effie begged her to accompany them; she could not bear to think that in her own happiness, her sister should be lonely or neglected, and the Captain declared they would all stay at home if Ellen did not go with them. So urged, Ellen consented, and putting on a grey linen jacket, and a dejected-looking old hat which hung in the hall, she walked drearily out along with the lovers, both of whom were afraid to say anything against the exceedingly shabby "get up," lest they might discourage her still more.

Bathers were already at work, thick and threefold, along the sunny strand, so the three young people took their way up the steep path to the cliff walk. Both Julius and Effie were kind as kind could be; nevertheless, Ellen felt lonely and out of place, and wished they had allowed her to remain with her mother.

"I am so tired, Effie," she said, when they had reached the top of the breezy cliff. "I should so like to sit down here on this soft grass, and watch the sea birds while you go further on."

"No, darling," said Effie, "we shall sit here until you have rested yourself."

"We are just above the Cave now, Ellen," said Julius, as he threw himself on the grass. "I must get another peep at it some day. To my recollection the sides seem to have been all the colours of the rainbow, and what a beautiful little view of the sea there was from it. Poor Theodore! I remember thinking that if it had been he who was there instead of me, he would have written a poem about it; Julian could do so as well, I daresay. When we are rested we may go on to the Cove; there are one or two days in the year, I believe, when

a boat can go from that to the 'Dead Man's Cave' without danger. By the way, did you ever observe how beautifully the flowers are blowing around that Cove? they are quite worth a visit, if the sun is not getting too hot. This weather is a seasoning for India, Effie, is it not?"

"Yes; I never felt Irish weather so warm: still I think we shall be able to walk as far as the Cove; we were there about a week ago; it is the prettiest spot in all Arranmore; but I heard that the house had been taken since, and perhaps it is no longer public property."

"Oh, the strand and the cliffs are always public property, and we need not go near the house unless we wish. When Ellen is quite rested, it will be a pleasant walk."

"I am quite rested now," said Ellen, rising languidly; "I think we had better go on to the Cove, it is not far."

There was a good road from the land side to the Cove House, but a steep and winding path led down from the cliffs—the path which Kitty Grant had so frequently traversed whilst arranging the house for her friends. Captain Jefferson and the sisters descended by it, and keeping as much aloof as possible from the house, walked slowly down the smooth, hard strand.

"I never saw the sea so still as it is to-day," said Julius, as they reached the margin where the rippling waves just rose and fell in lazy undulations; further out the water was as smooth and unruffled as a mirror. "What say you to a visit to the 'Dead Man's Cave,' Ellen?"


"I should like very well to see it again," said Ellen; "but I fancy I am not so good a climber now as when I was nine years old."

"I shall not ask you to climb; there would not be the slightest danger to a boat to-day, the sea is so perfectly calm."

"I should like to go," said Ellen—it would make me fancy that I was a child again."

"Is there really no danger, Julius?" said Effie, looking up.

"Do you think I would take you, or any one belonging to you into danger?" said the Captain, as he stooped down to the sweet sunny face, and further emphasised his words in a manner which did well enough in that secluded place, with only



a sister near. "If you do not mind waiting here for a quarter-of-an-hour or twenty minutes, I shall run round to Arranmore for a boat."

"Oh Effie, dear," said Ellen, when the two girls were alone, "I think I cannot bear this much longer. It is very, very wicked of me, but seeing you and Julius so happy together makes me feel, oh Effie, so miserable!"

"My own poor Nell!" said Effie, drawing her sister closer to her side.

"If I had anyone in the whole world to blame but myself; but I have not one—it is all my own fault. Julian did love me, I know he did, and I drove him from me in my reckless foolishness."

"My darling, perhaps he loves you still."

"No he does not, Effie, and I hope I may never see him again."

"Dear Nell! if you both live long, as I trust you will, I think it will be nearly impossible for you not to meet again, and often."

"No; I have thought about it all. He will not come to Lowbridge to your wedding; and then, you know, you will be going to India, and I shall never, never come to Holybrook again. I should ask to go to India with you, but that I could not bear to leave mamma."

"But, Nell, I hope to come back from India."

"Oh yes, Effie, yes; your coming back is the only bright thing I have to look forward to in all my future life. But Julius says, that except for a year or two now and then on leave of absence, or unless he leaves the army, it will be a long time; and then I shall be so old, and so cold, and so withered up every way, that it may be different. And Julian will be married to some one else; and I shall be making flannel petticoats, and distributing tracts, and attending to Dorcas Societies—so busy that I can think of nothing but my duties," said poor Ellen, with a little laugh, which the next moment changed into a great sob.

"Nell, dear," asked Effie, "did you not send some message with Mr. Ward?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Ellen, with a shudder, while she clasped her hands more tightly round her sister's arm; "Oh Effie! that is the hardest thing of all for me to think of. I must have been half-crazed that day to tell him—that dreadful old man!"

"Nell, my pet, he is as kind-hearted an old man, I believe, as there is in the world. What did you tell him?"

"Oh, I don't know—everything, I believe. What a fool I was! And, Effie, I begged him to ask Julian to forgive me before he died—I thought he was dying then—I thought I should be happy if he only knew how sorry I was, and if there were only the least hope of his recovery. But now he does know, and he is nearly well, and I—oh, I am more miserable than I ever was before."

"Why, darling?"

"Because it seems as if I were now asking back the love which I had once scorned and—and—and—— There is a letter which I received soon after from Mr. Ward—a dreadful letter,"—and Ellen drew from the pocket of her dress one of Samuel Ward's large-papered, large-sealed epistles, and dropped it into Effie's lap as if it wounded her even to touch it.

Poor man! he had spent a full hour in putting together the few guarded lines which it contained—had rather prided himself on its composition, and expected that it would have given great comfort to the recipient. It ran thus:—

"HOLYBROOK ABBEY, 7th Month, 3rd.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND, ELLEN WALKER,

"I feel quite encouraged to hope that I have acted as thou couldst wish. I have made Julian Jefferson acquainted with the state of thy mind, and I should be inclined to say that he is quite willing to forget, and overlook the past.—I am, thy friend,

"SAMUEL WARD."

Effie refolded the large sheet, whilst Ellen, looking earnestly into her face, saw just the suspicion of a smile round her sister's lips.

"Is it not dreadful, Effie?" she exclaimed. "Oh, what must Julian think of me?"

"I cannot see that this letter is so very dreadful," replied Effie. "Even Aunt Kitty allows that Mr. Ward is not the best of letter writers, and I daresay this does not at all convey the meaning which he intended."

"Willing to forget and overlook the past!" repeated Ellen. "Effie, Effie! I believe I must go to India with you after all: I cannot remain in this country," and laying her head on her sister's lap, she burst into tears—bitter and scalding tears, which, although they marred her beauty, relieved the intensity of her suffering.

Effie could answer only by soft caresses and soothing words. Even she could not now see what more it was possible for anyone to do—perhaps Ellen was right about Samuel Ward—perhaps he had only made bad worse.

The boat was coming round the headland. She heard steps approaching too, and glancing round, she saw Captain Jefferson, accompanied, she believed, by a boatman, walking slowly down the strand. It was but a glance, for she did not wish to disturb Ellen, who, although her sobbing had ceased, still rested her head upon her shoulder; and she did not look round again until Julius was close to her side, and had touched her slightly, to attract her attention. Effie had never, in all her acquaintance with the young Captain, seen him appear either confused or alarmed before, but now he looked both, as with a gesture of his hand he caused her to turn her head, and it was as much as the quiet little woman could do to prevent herself from screaming, when she saw Julian Jefferson standing but a few paces from the rock on which she sat. Ellen had risen when she heard the footsteps on the strand, and, to hide her agitation, was now stooping as if in search of something among the pebbles at her feet. Effie stretched out her hand and silently clasped that of the invalid. He was very pale and thin, and in many ways altered by his long illness, and yet he looked better than she had expected to see him, for thin as he was, he looked like a recovering man, and the smile which played around his mouth, and shone out of the large eyes, was as bright as ever, whilst his brother said, "It is not my fault—I did all I could to prevent it."

"It is altogether my fault," said Julian; "I am my own doctor to-day, and know that a sail on that smooth water will make me quite well, if only you will allow me to be of your party."

Julian's voice, although, perhaps, softer, had very much the same tone as his brother's, and so entirely unexpected to Ellen was his presence there, that she did not, at the first, notice any difference, nor did she attend to what was said; but as he proceeded, some slight but well-remembered intonation struck her ear, and she turned quickly to the speaker. She thought that she dreamed, or was the subject of some strange hallucination, and laying one trembling hand against the rock for support, she looked with a scared glance from one to the other of the



brothers. It was Julian—Julian himself, in life and limb, but oh! so pale—so changed! And Julian, did not he see sad changes, too, as poor Ellen stood before him with her tear-stained cheeks, her careworn looks, and limp, untended dress—she appeared only like the ghost of the lovely girl whom he had last beheld, all radiant with triumphant beauty.

Ellen looked for a moment into the young man's face, and then she felt as if she were, somehow, herself changing into stone—there seemed such a deadly coldness gathering round her heart. Effie spoke, and Julius spoke, and she felt her own cold, trembling hand for a moment pressed in Julian's; and then they were all walking along the rock, beside which the boat was waiting for them. Then there was some difficulty in embarking—some settling of cushions, &c., and then they pushed away from the shore, whilst the plash of the oars, and the ripple of the little wavelets, made a low, soft music as the boat glided smoothly over the blue sunny waters, out round the frowning headland and into the creek, at the end of which yawned the dreaded cave. On either side rose dark precipitous rocks, all worn away and indented by the furious seas which, in winter time, rushed thundering along the narrow inlet, leaping up its perpendicular sides, and roaring and bellowing in the cavern beyond. Now, however, the water was almost as smooth as glass, and clearer than crystal, the deep blue colour changing, as the shore was approached, to a brighter and brighter emerald hue as the yellow sand shone more and more through the shallower water. It seemed all a dream to Ellen still—whether the dream were exquisitely painful or the reverse she could not have told; but the hand which lay in that of her sister was icy cold, and she could not utter a word, nor look at any of her companions.

At first, Captain Jefferson and Effie had tried to converse, as if there had been nothing unusual in the circumstances; but finding it too difficult to do so, they apparently gave their attention to the gulls, which were flitting over the sea, or resting on the rocks above their heads.

"Now Captin," said the sailor, as with a soft crunshing sound the boat ran up between two rocks which formed the only landing place—"now Captin, here we are, yer honour, an' ye can get out an' see all the cur'osities of the cave as no man has

an opportunity of doing,—no, not more'n three times a year, an' sometimes not so much, for the least swell in the sea ever you seen's enough to knock the bottom out of the boat among these sharp rocks ; an' the young ladies might live to a hundred afore they could get in here again. But still, if the poor young lady, that seems far from well, w'd prefer to stay in the boat, Jim an' I'll row her about with the greatest of pleasure till ye's come back."

"No, no, thank you," said Captain Jefferson : "we shall all land ; but you had better row out a bit into the open water—if you remain within call it will be enough."

Now in this brilliant July weather nothing could be more charming than the whole appearance of the little inlet—a beach of yellow glittering sand, interspersed with shells and many-coloured pebbles, sloped up from the margin of the ocean to the mouth of the cave, and was walled in on each side by steep water-worn rocks, whilst above rose, for hundreds of feet, almost perpendicular precipices, their rugged front softened and adorned with lines and patches of the greenest grass, as well as pale but beautiful sea flowers and ferns, which grew in every possible and impossible ledge or crevice. Grey and white gulls, who made these inaccessible rocks their breeding places, and who had not yet quite finished the rearing of their last broods, were flitting across the face of the cliff, looking no larger than snowflakes, up aloft ; and a pair of choughs, in their neat clerical plumage and scarlet stockings, were strutting to and fro on a narrow ledge, uttering their short, self-satisfied caw, as much as to say, "Whoever may think this a troublesome world, we, at least, find it and ourselves altogether agreeable and satisfactory." From out the cave, with rushing wings and shining plumage, a flock of pigeons came whirling past—all Nature was alive, and all rejoicing, except the four human beings who now—as the boat which had brought them pushed away from amongst the sharp rocks and out to the open water—walked up the strand and paused at the entrance of the cave.

"It is just the same as it was ten years ago," said Captain Jefferson ; "and really, do you know, Ellen, I do not think I was so much mistaken with regard to the rainbow hues," he continued, as he looked at the long pool of crystal water, sur-

rounded by its smooth rocks, and mimic strands, and arched over by the high and beautiful dome which the sea had worn, and polished almost to the smoothness of marble. "Come, Effie, you and I must try a voyage round it, but give me your hand, for the footing is not very secure:" so saying, Captain Jefferson entered the cavern to show its wonders to his intended bride.

"The rocks look slippery," said Julian—"too much so, I think, for recently-mended bones to venture upon. I shall remain here at the entrance—the view is beautiful, or views rather, for I can see both into the cave and put to the open sea. Ellen," he continued, looking into the girl's face with a wistful glance, "I am a poor invalid, spoiled, perhaps, by too much kindness; but I do not like to be left alone, even here: will you not stay with me?"

Ellen was very pale, and her lips were compressed. She cast a troubled glance, first to the cave and then to the ocean, then slowly and sadly she turned her eyes to the young man's face. "Julian," she said, while she clasped her hands tightly together, "I do not think you know that I alone am to blame for all the terrible suffering which you have undergone. I could have warned you, and prevented all. But oh! if you knew the anguish which I have endured—if you knew that I would gladly, oh, how gladly, have given my life for yours—I think you would forgive me."

"Forgive you dear, dearest Ellen!" said the young man, greatly moved; "I could not do otherwise if I wished—ah, do not speak to me of forgiveness."

"I never intended to have seen you or spoken to you again, Julian; but I would have written, and have sent you this—this which might have saved you, and prevented all which happened," said Ellen, as with trembling fingers she drew from her little pocket-book an envelope, which she handed to Julian.

"What is it?" he asked, taking it from her, but not opening it.

"It is the note which Mr. Maunders intrusted to me for you, and which I tore to pieces in my passionate recklessness."

Julian did not open the envelope, but before he spoke again, he tore it and its contents into small fragments, which he dropped into a deep cleft in the rock. "Let the ocean deal with it now," he said, looking up with a bright smile; "but

never think of this again, or of anything which has troubled you during the past months. Ellen, you are all the world to me—my life, for without the hope of seeing you again—the hope of one day gaining you for my very own—I do not believe that I could have rallied, or overcome the languor of hopeless loneliness that oppressed me, even after all other causes of illness were removed. You will not crush the sweet hopes which have been dawning like a renewed life in my heart. Ellen, dearest, will you not be mine—my wife?"

"Oh Julian! Julian!" it was all that she could say, but she laid both her hands in his, and the answer was enough.

When Captain Jefferson and Effie returned from their walk round the cave, they saw at a glance that all was right between their brother and sister, for they scarcely appeared to be the same Julian and Ellen whom they had left behind. Although Ellen's eyes were still glistening with tears, there was within them, and over her whole countenance a glow of happiness, and a beauty which even the dejected hat and the limp linen dress had no power to mar. Even the boatmen, as they rowed the party home, observed the change, although she was as silent as before, and thought the "Dead Man's Cave" must have had wonderful healing powers, for the young lady who had appeared so "far from strong," now looked "better than well;" and as for the Captain's sick brother, he seemed as if he had "found both health and fortune."

"But why the final note prolong,  
Or lengthen out a closing song?"

There is no need to describe the loveliness of that summer, whose glowing and cloudless days continued from July to August, and on into the rich and golden September, nor to tell of the happy hours spent on the breezy cliffs and sunny strands of Arranmore. It is enough to say that it was not long before the sea air, or some other influence equally potent, brought back the brightness to Ellen's eyes, and the roses to her cheeks; the worn drawn look of silent anguish which had made her for a time look almost old, quite disappeared—she was lovelier than ever, for in some way, which should be seen to be understood, her beauty was enhanced tenfold by the softness and gentleness of demeanour which had taken the place of her

former almost passionate impulsiveness. As for Julian Jefferson, his health was quite restored; and when in October he returned to Holybrook, he was a stronger man than he had ever been before—active and energetic, delighting the hearts of his mother and Mr. Maunders by his close and unfailing attention to all the affairs of the place.

In December, Effie and Ellen Walker were, on the same day, married to Julius and Julian Jefferson, in St. Anne's Church, Lowbridge, by the Rev. Paul Tatlow, assisted by the vicar of St. Anne's.

In January, Captain Jefferson and his bride sailed for India, Julian and Ellen Jefferson accompanying their brother and sister up the Mediterranean, which proved at this season a very pleasant wedding trip.

Before they sailed, however, they attended two very quiet weddings—that of Margaret Grey and Dr. Grant, who were married in the little church at Holybrook; and that of Catherine Grant and Samuel Ward, who were married in a meeting for worship according to the simple form used by the Society of Friends.

For the rest, Mrs. Stevens has taken a house for herself not far from that occupied by her brother-in-law and sister, over whose welfare she is still anxious to watch.

Mr. Grey lives with Dr. Grant and Margaret, happy in their quiet home, and in the thought that his daughter will have a kind and loving protector when he is gone.

Mrs. Jefferson continues to reside at Holybrook Abbey with Julian and Ellen. She has not a fault to find with either of them now, and they and she hopefully look forward to the time when Julius and Effie shall return from India. Mr. Maunders is still their factotum, and likely to continue so to the end of his days.

Neither Jenny Tuff nor Anne Dempsey united their fortunes with those of Dan Corr—Anne married the baker, and Jenny remains faithful to her old master and mistress, and to her resolution of never taking her money out of the bank for the purpose of "buying a bad husband."

As to the families at the Mill and Parsonage, there are not any changes amongst them, and so we shall say good-bye to all.

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